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INDEPENDENCE

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Manifestly Sleazy



What does U.S. presidential candidate Donald Trump have in common with overthrown Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, now in exile under the protection of Russian President Vladimir Putin? For one, both hired U.S. political consultant Paul Manafort (C), who is Trump's campaign chairman. These ties, along with Trump's pro-Kremlin stances and refusal to release his tax returns, have fueled speculation that the Republican candidate is hiding financial deals with Russia. In the background are handwritten ledgers seized from Yanukovich's Party of Regions during the EuroMaidan Revolution that drove him from power. Records show \$12.7 million in cash payments to Manafort from 2007-2012, allegations he denies. (AFP)

BY OLEG SUKHOV
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Paul Manafort, the one-time advisor to disgraced former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, was

hailed as a great asset when he was taken on a few months ago as Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's campaign chairman.

But with the latest revelations about shady deals Manafort seems to have been involved in while in Ukraine, he's looking more like a

serious liability.

According to various news reports, Manafort allegedly received an undeclared \$12.7 million from Yanukovich's Party of Regions and helped a Yanukovich-linked non-profit organization to secretly route \$2.2 million to U.S. lobbyists.

The revelations are seen as further damaging Trump's now long-shot prospects to win the Nov. 8 U.S. presidential election against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Manafort also could face criminal charges in the United States and Ukraine for possible tax evasion,

money laundering and failure to disclose lobbying on behalf of a foreign government.

Manafort, who was a political consultant who helped Yanukovich regain power after the 2004 Orange

more Manafort on page 2

See 24-page special Independence Day edition inside

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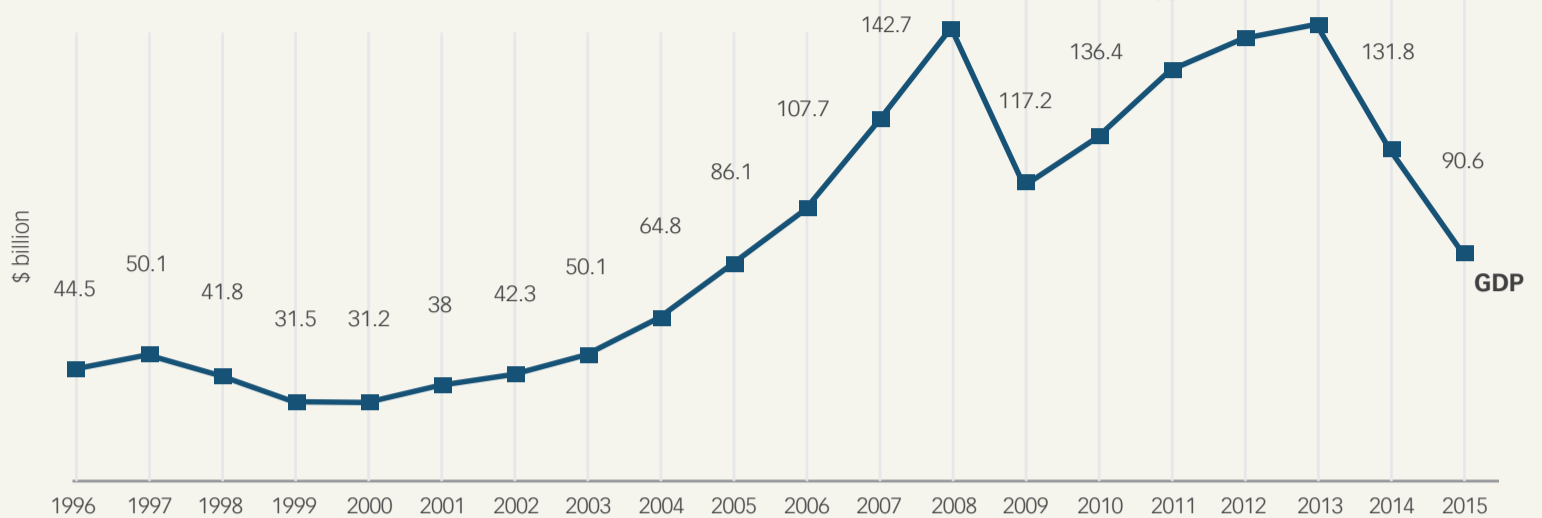
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GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT
(1996 — 2015)

Ukraine's gross domestic product has almost halved, from \$181.3 billion to \$90.6 billion, since the EuroMaidan Revolution and Russia's war in 2014. But recovery is on the way, with GDP expected to rise 1.3 percent this year.



By Stella Shabliovska, Kyiv Post | Source: World Bank

Weekly business update

BY YULIANA ROMANYSHYN, ISOBEL KOSHIW AND NATALIE VIKHROV
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Central bank to cut staff

The National Bank of Ukraine plans to lay off half of its workforce in the next stage of its internal restructuring. The cutbacks are among changes expected to take place within the central bank over the next two-and-a-half years as it seeks to increase its transparency and independence, with the aim of integrating the bank into the "European community of national central banks," the NBU said in a post on its website.

The bank cut its workforce from 11,800 to 5,300 in the first stage of its restructuring, which finished in 2015.

"Over the last two years, the NBU has undergone considerable change, giving up the post-Soviet model of a state regulator with too many staff and low

efficiency," Roman Borysenko, director of the NBU's personnel department, said in the announcement.

Borysenko listed institutional independence, improvements in decision-making, reducing hierarchy and "making corruption impossible" as among the bank's recent achievements. "Many changes are still to be made as we rapidly move towards a modern and effective model of a European central bank," Borysenko said.

Wheat exports double

Ukraine's producers exported 7.1 million tons of wheat over the first six months of 2016, which is 93 percent more than during the same period of 2015.

According to an expert from the Agricultural Business Club, Yevheniy Dvornik, exports rose because of a good harvest, improved production and stabilization of wheat prices.

According to Ukraine's State Statistics Service, Egypt is the largest importer of Ukrainian wheat, buying around 20 percent of all the wheat Ukraine exports. Indonesia and Bangladesh were the next biggest importers of Ukrainian wheat in 2016.

Dvornik predicted a slight reduction in wheat production this year as farmers cut back on planting because of low wheat prices. "Sunflower is in greater demand, so the planted area for it has significantly increased," Dvornik said. He also said sunflower are more profitable.

2 more banks closed

Classicbank and Eurobank will be liquidated, the National Bank of Ukraine has announced. The move was proposed by the Deposit Guarantee Fund.

Classicbank was identified as a problem bank in December 2015 because of its non-transparent ownership structure. It was declared insolvent on June 14 after failing to rectify the problem. Eurobank was declared insolvent on June 17.

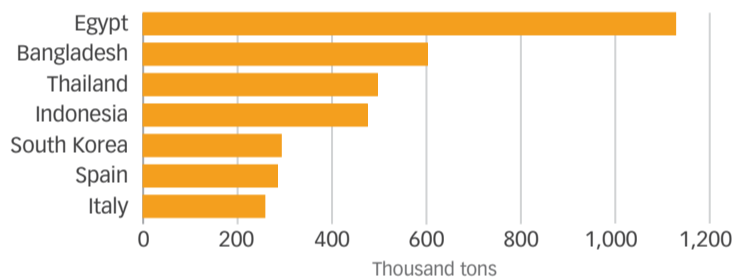
The number of banks operating in Ukraine has dropped from 180 to 101.

FDI: \$44.7 billion

Total foreign direct investment in Ukraine has increased to \$44.7 billion, according to the Ukraine's State

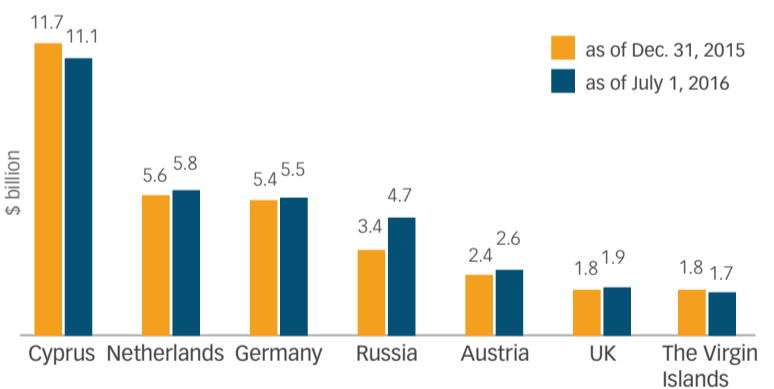
TOP 7 WHEAT DESTINATIONS
(Jan-May, 2016)

Over the last five months, Ukraine has doubled its exports of wheat compared to the same period in 2015. The nation exported 5.1 million tons.



FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
(2015 — 2016)

Despite Russia's war against Ukraine, direct investment from Russia has increased in the first six months of 2016.



Not including data for Crimea and the occupied territories of the Donbas. By Juliana Romanyshyn, Stella Shabliovska, Kyiv Post | Source: Ukrstat.

Statistics Service.- \$2.5 billion more than January. According to the state agency, 83 percent of the FDI to Ukraine came from 10 countries: Cyprus, the Netherlands, Germany, Russia, Austria, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Italy. Five out of the 10 countries operate offshore tax havens and remaining ones are favored residences of the ultra-rich. Notably, Russian investment into Ukraine has increased by almost 3 percent since January.

Direct investment by Ukraine in 47 countries on July 1 stood at \$6.2 billion, with Cyprus leading the way.

Smokescreen?

A new electronic asset and property declarations system for government personnel was activated on Aug. 15, but it has not been certified by the State Service for Government Communications.

The absence of certification could

lead the International Monetary Fund and the European Union to suspend future loans and aid to Ukraine.

The State Service for Government Communications said on Aug. 12 that it had refused to certify the electronic property declaration system because information protection solutions in the system were noncompliant with technical requirements.

Vitaly Shabunin, the head of the Anti-Corruption Action Center's executive board, said that without certification, evidence of wrongdoing wouldn't be admissible in court. He called for the system to be certified within soon and for officials to re-declare their assets. He also said those responsible for the bungled launch of the system should be fired.

Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman said the system was expected to be fully launched soon. ■

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Manafort's Yanukovych ties damage Trump's campaign

Manafort from page 1

Revolution overturned a rigged election in which he was declared the winner, has said that the reports of illegal cash payments were "unfounded, silly and nonsensical."

He has not yet commented on the transfer of \$2.2 million to the United States, but Rick Gates, another Trump aide, and the lobbying firms themselves have admitted the transfer of the funds.

Trump demoted Manafort to a secondary role in his campaign on Aug. 17, seen as a response to the growing concern over the overtly pro-Kremlin ties within the Trump campaign.

Off-the-book payments

The Party of Regions paid over \$12.7 million to Manafort in 2007 through 2012, Ukraine's National Anti-Corruption Bureau said on Aug. 15.

The bureau said there were 22 accounting entries related to Manafort in a hand-written Party of Regions ledger thought to have been discovered when anti-government protesters ransacked the party's office in Kyiv during the EuroMaidan Revolution. The Times, a London newspaper, said on Aug. 17 that it had obtained 12 of the entries, and it has published three of them.

The payments intended for Manafort were among \$2 billion in secret payments allegedly made by the Party of Regions to bribe officials and politicians from 2007 to 2012. The accounting ledgers were given to the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine in May by Viktor Trepak, an ex-deputy chief of the Security Service of Ukraine.

Yanukovych lobbyist?

The Associated Press also reported on Aug. 17, citing sources with knowledge of the matter, that Manafort and Rick Gates had helped to channel \$2.2 million from the European Center for a Modern Ukraine, a non-profit linked to Yanukovych's regime, to U.S. lobbying firms Podesta Group and Mercury.

The lobbying firms were paid to advocate positions in line with those of Yanukovych's government, including downplaying the necessity for a congressional resolution to pressure Yanukovych to release his imprisoned political rival Yulia Tymoshenko, according to the AP.

Podesta Group is headed by Tony Podesta, the brother of Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman John Podesta, while the head of Mercury is Vin Weber, an ex-advisor to Republican Mitt Romney.

Meanwhile, Ina Kirsch, head of the European Center for a Modern Ukraine, is also mentioned in the off-the-book ledgers, Sergii Leshchenko, a lawmaker from the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, told the Kyiv Post. Kirsch did not reply to a request for comment.

The Times also reported on Aug. 17, citing a memo written by an unidentified prosecutor, that Manafort had allegedly helped to orchestrate anti-NATO, pro-Russian protests and sabotage U.S. interests in Crimea in 2006.

According to sources cited by the Times, Manafort attended security briefings in an "anti-revolution situation room" during the 2013-14 EuroMaidan Revolution, when more than 100 protesters were killed.

According to other reports, Manafort also unsuccessfully tried to buy an Odesa telecoms firm from offshore companies linked to Yanukovych in 2008 jointly with Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, and has attempted to buy New York City properties on behalf of gas mogul Dmytro Firtash, a Yanukovych ally.

Getting rich

The Fusion news site reported on Aug. 17 that Manafort had gotten wealthy during his stint as a Yanukovych consultant and had purchased more than \$11 million worth of U.S. real estate during that period.

Fusion also reported, citing documents recovered after Yanukovych fled Ukraine, that Manafort helped coordinate a Skadden Arps report

intended to show that Tymoshenko's imprisonment was justified. The report was spearheaded by former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig.

Manafort's daughter Andrea started working at Skadden Arps in 2012.

No charges likely

Prosecuting Manafort will be hard, however.

The entries in the Party of Regions ledgers do not necessarily mean that Manafort actually received the money, as the payments intended for Manafort were actually given to other people, whose signatures are indicated, the anti-graft bureau said on Aug. 15.

The signatures have not yet been verified, and the entries cannot be cross-referenced against banking records.

So far there is no evidence that Manafort himself received the money, and therefore he is "highly unlikely" to be charged in Ukraine, Artur Kyyan, a lawyer at Ukraine's Lavrynovych and Partners law firm, told the Kyiv Post.

Even if Ukraine starts a criminal case against Manafort, his extradition from the United States would be almost impossible, Mykola Gnatovsky, an international law professor at Kyiv National University, said by phone.

"Considering U.S. practice, this is practically hopeless," he said. "This is in the realm of science fiction."

The U.S. does not trust Ukraine because it "doesn't have a functioning judicial system," Gnatovsky said.

However, lawyers say that Manafort could be charged in the United States with violating the Foreign Agents Registration Act for failing to disclose both the alleged \$7.6 million payments in the accounting ledgers, and the \$2.2 million transfer to the lobbying firms. Under the act, all lobbyists must report on their services to foreign governments to the U.S. Department of Justice.

If Manafort's guilt is proven in court, he could be fined up to \$250,000 or jailed for up to five

years, Kyyan said.

And if the report of the \$2.2 million transfer is true, "there are grounds for at least starting a criminal investigation in Ukraine," Sergey Grebenyuk, a partner at Egorov, Puginsky, Afanasiev and Partners, told the Kyiv Post. Possible charges could include tax evasion and money laundering, he added.

Trump slips in polls

Trump's rating continued to slide after the revelations about Manafort's alleged financial dealings with the Yanukovych regime were published. The reports came after a slew of other Trump insults and attacks, including his seeming endorsement of Russia's annexation of Crimea and call for an end to anti-Kremlin sanctions, each of which provoked criticism.

"That said, if it can be conclusively proven that Manafort was on the take with Yanukovych, that will serve to discredit Trump even more among the Republican elite, who are increasingly unenthusiastic about him as it is," Alexander J. Motyl, a political science professor at Rutgers University in the United States, told the Kyiv Post. "Trump appears to be self-destructing."

Motyl said, however, that "most Americans care little about foreign policy - and about Ukraine even less."

Still, the exposure of ties to the Yanukovych government and Trump's rhetoric on Russia and Ukraine may drive even more Republican voters away from Trump.

"All of it has pushed (Republicans) into the position where they don't believe Trump has the knowledge," Reno Domenico, chairman of Democrats Abroad, told the Kyiv Post. "He can hardly read from a teleprompter let alone have an in-depth understanding of these questions."

Domenico said that Trump "completely misanswered by not really being knowledgeable about the fact that Crimea is gone, which is a kind of thing that scares a lot of people. We have considerable evidence that the Russian security services penetrated the emails and database services of the Democratic National Committee. And then we have the candidate who stands on TV and asks the Russian security services to continue to probe. This is un-American. You can begin to make the argument that it's treasonous." ■

Two Olympic gold medalists for Ukraine

Bottom: Ukraine's Iurii Cheban celebrates winning the gold medal in the men's canoe single C1 200-meter event during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games on Aug. 18. Right: Ukraine's Oleg Verniaiev celebrates winning the gold medal on the men's parallel bars in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Aug. 16. As of deadline on Aug. 18, Ukraine had won eight medals - two gold, four silver and two bronze - to rank 21st among nations. (AFP)





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Editorials

Independence Day

A foreigner among us recently asked a Ukrainian friend what she is doing for the big 25th Independence Day celebration. She replied: "Nothing special. Every day is Independence Day for us." Indeed it is. Come Aug. 24, Ukraine will have been alive as an independent nation for 9,125 days.

There are many lessons in all of this: This is a true nation, no matter what its external enemies, Vladimir Putin chief among them, think. This is a nation with a strong society and weak state, made weaker by the corruption and impunity of its leaders. This could be a rich nation without all the robbery.

Yet there is still so much to be proud of and, in the print editions this week and next, the Kyiv Post will revel in areas of business, leadership and culture where Ukraine has made its mark on the world.

However, another overriding lesson is a hard one: That the fight for independence and liberty never ends.

As Ukraine turns 25, an anniversary Russian imperialists are loathe to recognize, the Kremlin continues its war without much of a strong response from the world. Emboldened, Putin has taken to trying to undermine Western institutions and meddle in elections – most recently the American presidential contest – in his desperate quest to stay in power and rebuild an evil empire.

Additionally, Ukraine is threatened from within, by leaders who weaken the state with their own corruption and by not allowing for strong law enforcement institutions to punish the corruption of others. Ukraine's corruption is so strong that its cancer is seeping into the U.S. presidential election, with secret records showing \$12.7 million in 22 illegal payments to Paul Manafort, who worked for the Kremlin stooge, ex-President Viktor Yanukovich. Manafort, who denies receiving cash payments from Yanukovich, is now Republican Donald Trump's campaign manager and doing his best, it seems, to turn Trump into Putin's lackey as well.

It's a sad spectacle that Ukraine, despite employing 15,000 prosecutors, 9,000 judges, 150,000 police officers and tens of thousands of Security Service of Ukraine agents, still cannot successfully prosecute a major corruption case. The spectacle of the General Prosecutor's Office and National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine scuffling last weekend is even sadder. Still sadder is the government's sabotage of the e-declarations system designed to hold public officials accountable, but rendered toothless at the moment because of a refusal to certify software.

The political will of Ukraine's leaders is lacking to fight corruption, dismantle the oligarchy and to make progress on joining the European Union and NATO. The elite still battle their own people and ignore their aspirations. The struggle for the soul of the nation is still very much alive.

Manafort mess

We wish we would have broken the story that 22 of the 20,000 payments on ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's leaked black ledger of \$2 billion in secrecy payments included \$12.7 million in payments over five years to Paul Manafort.

Manafort is the immoral political operative who cleaned up Yanukovich, transforming him from dictator to democrat, long enough to get the fugitive leader elected as Ukraine's president in 2010. Now Manafort is trying to work his magic on Donald Trump, one of the most dangerous and despicable characters nominated for the U.S. presidency. Their mutual admiration appears to include love of money, love of dictators, such as Russia's Vladimir Putin, and winning at all costs.

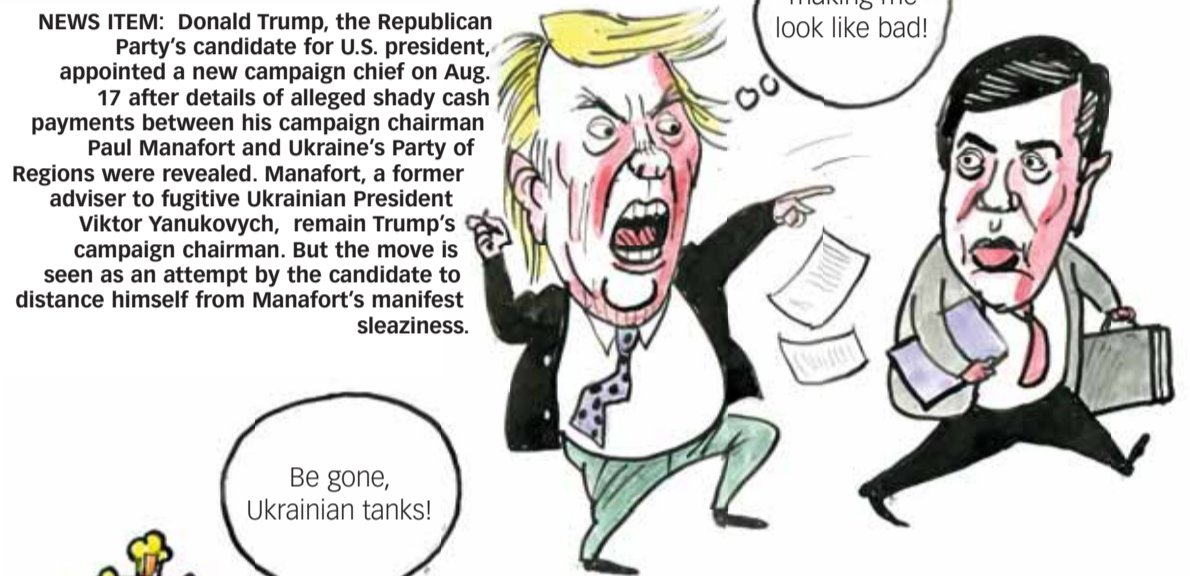
While Manafort's work for Yanukovich is well-known, his inclusion in the handwritten ledger of recorded payments cover his association with a fitting coat of sleaze. We are certainly glad that the story became public, on Aug. 14, in The New York Times, because such revelations will only help bury the Trump candidacy well before the Nov. 8 vote.

But for Ukraine, the issue is not so much Manafort as it is exposing, investigating and prosecuting, where credible evidence is found, the other people named in the records seized from Yanukovich's defunct Party of Regions. Why is the General Prosecutor's Office, Interior Ministry and Security Service of Ukraine not diving into these cases? It's a flimsy excuse that, because a weakly staffed but apparently earnest National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine is operational, that its employees should be responsible for investigating all wrongdoing.

Ukraine has much to do to get its house in order. It has many cases of unsolved corruption, including the Yanukovich ledgers. Ukraine's major institutions – prosecutors, police and judges – need to get moving.



NEWS ITEM: Ukraine is gearing up to celebrate its 25th Independence Day on Aug. 24. The struggle to maintain its independence has intensified because of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who regards Ukraine as a territory of Russia rather than an independent nation. Since 2014, Russia has waged war against Ukraine after annexing the Crimean peninsula after a military invasion.



NEWS ITEM: Donald Trump, the Republican Party's candidate for U.S. president, appointed a new campaign chief on Aug. 17 after details of alleged shady cash payments between his campaign chairman Paul Manafort and Ukraine's Party of Regions were revealed. Manafort, a former adviser to fugitive Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, remain Trump's campaign chairman. But the move is seen as an attempt by the candidate to distance himself from Manafort's manifest sleaziness.



NEWS ITEM: Oleksandr Avdyuhin, a priest of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, posted a photograph on Facebook sitting on a destroyed Ukrainian tank. "Please stop coming to us. Do you have to do this? Let this be the last photo of one of your tanks, which are absolutely unneeded and unwanted by anyone," Avdyuhin wrote.



NEWS ITEM: Russian biker Alexander Zaldostanov, a.k.a The Surgeon, a friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin, arranged a spectacular show with pioneers, fireworks and the Soviet anthem in Russian-occupied Crimea. The performance was entitled "The Fifth Republic," although it resembled Nazi propaganda.

KyivPost

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Reformer of the week

Artem Sytnyk

Artem Sytnyk, head of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau, has clashed with the Prosecutor General's Office – a corrupt, distrusted and politicized agency – over the past week.

Activists view the conflict as part of President Petro Poroshenko's efforts to crack down on the bureau's independence and restrict its ability to jail corrupt officials.

Employees of the bureau were conducting surveillance of prosecutors subordinated to Volodymyr Hutsulyak and Dmytro Sus last week in a corruption case. According to the employees' testimony, they were tortured by the prosecutors.

A source with knowledge of the matter told the Kyiv Post that Sus was a suspect in an unlawful enrichment case. Sus has admitted using an Audi Q7 car and claims that he bought it with his \$12,000 annual salary. The car, which costs about \$40,000, was not included in Sus' 2015 declaration and is reportedly registered to Sus' grandmother.

Meanwhile, earlier this month the bureau caught Mykola Chaus, a judge reportedly tied to Poroshenko's grey cardinal Oleksandr Hranovsky, with a \$150,000 bribe earlier this month.

Lawmaker Sergii Leshchenko said on Aug. 17 that Hranovsky was planning to file a motion with the Constitutional Court to strip the anti-graft bureau of part of its powers.

– Oleg Sukhov



Anti-reformer of the week

Volodymyr Hutsulyak

Employees of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine on Aug. 15 accused prosecutors of the anti-graft department of the Prosecutor General's Office of torture. That unit is headed by Volodymyr Hutsulyak.

The employees were conducting surveillance of the prosecutors in a corruption case and called the anti-graft bureau's special force unit, which helped to free them.

Hutsulyak and his deputy Dmytro Sus deny the bureau's version, in turn accusing the bureau's special force unit of beating them up.

Hutsulyak and Sus have been accused of fabricating political cases on behalf of President Petro Poroshenko's grey cardinals, Ihor Kononenko and Oleksandr Hranovsky. They deny the accusations. Hutsulyak and Sus are also reportedly protégés of Deputy Prosecutor General Yuriy Stolyarchuk. According to lawmaker Yegor Sobolev, Stolyarchuk also visited the alleged torture chamber.

Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko has faced intensifying pressure to fire or suspend Stolyarchuk, Sus and Hutsulyak, but thus far has ignored the demands.

– Oleg Sukhov



What are Ukraine's biggest achievements and failures in the last 25 years?



Grigoriy Chorny, retired
"The situation in the Donbas and (the annexation of) Crimea are failures. The government should have conducted a policy in those regions (to prevent the war). But thanks to the war, we finally got reform of the army, which is now capable of defending us. And the biggest achievement is the Euromaidan Revolution."



Lidia Demchenko, student
"The greatest achievement is that we're now closer to Europe. One failure is that many people still have a Soviet mindset, and there's a huge gap in mindsets between the generations."



Natalia Pikha, retired
"One achievement is that we have a democratic government that seeks to make Ukraine a European country. The biggest failure is that Ukraine couldn't prevent the war in the east."



Ihor Stadnychenko, art restorer
"The greatest achievement is that Ukraine has a market economy and a free market. I'm happy now that smart and hardworking people have more options to make a living. The biggest failure is the corruption at all levels."



Victor Nadtochi, photographer
"The greatest achievement is that society has mobilized, especially young people. The greatest failure is the economic and political crisis, and the lawlessness."



Catherine Shister, quality standards expert
"Ukraine formed a civic society and a national identity. Because of the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the Euromaidan Revolution, my friends and I realized that we are Ukrainians and that we belong to this country. However, our political system...prevents our country from fighting corruption."

We're all Ukrainians – in more ways than one



Both my grandparents on my mother's side were born in Ukraine, even though they didn't consider themselves Ukrainians.

They were Jews and, in those days, ethnicity equalled nationality. No one ever thought of them as Ukrainians while they lived in Kyiv. The same was true when they and other Ukrainian Jews settled in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities in the 1920s. They never thought of themselves as Russians.

The concept of nationality has changed over the past century.

Nationality today has less to do with ethnicity than with a range of factors, including citizenship, place of birth, cultural affiliation, etc. A typical Frenchman today is no longer a slightly built white man with a blonde mustache - which was always an abstraction, anyway - but, increasingly, someone like the guys who play on the French national soccer team - of African, Arab or Eastern European origin, with an admixture of other countries and continents. Today's concept of nationality assumes assimilation into the new nation along with the retention of a number of cultural traits.

And so my American-born son identifies himself as part-Ukrainian and part-Kazakh, even though ethnically his grandparents who came to Moscow from Ukraine and Kazakhstan were Jews and Russians.

Under communism, nationality was always a tricky subject. On the one hand, the communist dogma downplayed nationality as a quaint relic of the capitalist past. As Karl Marx put it, the proletariat had no country and workers were supposed to feel class solidarity that transcended national borders and ethnic and religious divisions. On the other hand, Russia was a giant colonial empire, both inside and outside its borders, and it needed to develop policy with regard to subject nations.

The Soviet Union was a giant melting pot, where people of different cultures and languages mingled while remaining Armenians, Tatars, Uzbeks, etc., on the basis of their parentage or last names. The internal passport always spelled out the bearer's nationality, including, notoriously, Jewish. In the end, the communists never found a successful



Left: Vladimir Narbut, a Russian writer born in Ukraine, was executed in 1938 during Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's Great Terror. Right: The certificate of release of poet Pavel Shleyman (Karaban), a Donetsk Oblast native, imprisoned for five years during Stalin's reign. (Courtesy)



solution to the nationalities question and were unable to create a true Soviet identity. In the end, when the Soviet Union collapsed, it split into 15 ethnic republics which became nation states - some for the first time in their history.

The Ukrainian diaspora in Russia was by far the largest. Ukraine was Russia's most populous colony and Ukrainians were closest to Russians in language and culture, especially in the eastern and cossack-populated territories. Ukrainians began settling in Siberia in large numbers in the late 19th and 20th century, but after the Bolshevik takeover the migration accelerated. Many moved from Ukraine to Russia voluntarily, to seek employment or, in the case of Moscow, better living conditions in the capital. Others - an overwhelming majority - were relocated forcibly during never-ending Stalinist purges, collectivization and post-war "cleansing" of the territories that had been under German occupation.

In fact, scratch a typical Muscovite and you'll find a Ukrainian somewhere in the background. This is especially true of the intelligentsia families - artists, writers, musicians, etc.

My half-brother's maternal grandfather was poet Pavel Shleyman (Karaban), born in Shcherbinivka

of Donetsk Oblast, until recently known as Dzerzhinsk and, after its brief occupation by Kremlin-backed terrorists, renamed Toretsk. In the 1920s he lived in Kharkiv, at the time Ukraine's capital. He was part of a vibrant cultural and literary scene in the city, working also as a translator and rendering a number of Ukrainian poets into Russian.

Having moved to Moscow, Shleyman was arrested in 1936 and accused of plotting to set up a Ukrainian nationalist cell, whose goal was to promote works of Ukrainian writers. As was typical of the NKVD trials of the period, the cell was mostly a figment of the prosecutor's imagination. Luckily, this happened just before Stalin's Great Terror really got going, and the five "co-conspirators" got only five years of hard labor each. They were released after serving out their sentences - except for Vladimir Norbut, a Russian writer who was also born in Ukraine, to a noble family of Lithuanian origin. Norbut was the most prominent writer of the five "plotters." He was tried for the second time at a Kolyma camp and executed in 1938.

As an aside, Norbut's older brother Georgy, an

Guide to Independence Day celebrations in the capital

BY MARIIA ULIANOVSKA

Kyiv is gradually taking on a festive look as preparations continue for one of the biggest national holidays yet – the 25th anniversary of Ukraine's independence as a nation. The Kyiv Post has picked out these events that highlight the celebrations.

1. Arts exhibition

The house of Artists on Lvivska Square presents an art exhibition. The exhibition aims to showcase diversity with works from modern Ukrainian artists. More than 400 pieces of art of different genres and styles will represent everyday life of Ukrainians and Ukraine's natural beauty.

2. Spivoche Pole flowers

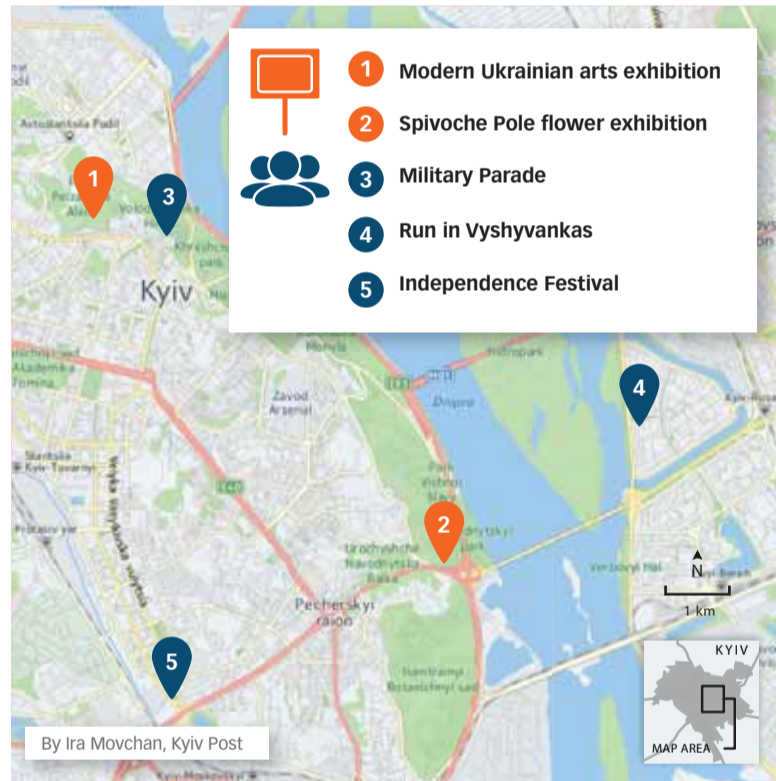
Those who want to combine the beauty of nature and learn more about outstanding Ukrainians should plan a visit to Pechersk Spivoche Pole Landscape Park over the holiday.

The 6th annual flower exhibition on Spivoche Pole is this year dedicated to the 25th anniversary of Ukraine, and features the 3D flower portraits of famous Ukrainians, among them the pioneering surgeon Mykola Amosov, composer Mykola Lysenko, engineer Evgen Paton, and artists Maria Prymachenko and Kazimir Malevich. Visitors will be able to feast their eyes on 10 flower portraits made out of more than 300,000 flowers.

The exhibition is open 9 a.m. – 9



Ukrainian soldiers march past the dignitaries' podium on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kyiv on Independence Day in 2015. (Volodymyr Petrov)



Several events are planned to celebrate Ukraine's 25th birthday as an independent state on Aug. 24.

p.m. until Sept. 18. The entrance fee is Hr 30 - 80.

3. Military parade

A military parade will proceed along Khreshchatyk Street, past dignitaries on the podium on Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or Independence Square. More than 3,000 uniformed servicemen and servicewomen will take part, along with 200 pieces of military equipment. The parade will be held on the morning of Aug. 24.

Celebrations will be overshadowed again by the deaths of thousands of soldiers and civilians in Russia's war against Ukraine. To commemorate fallen Ukrainian soldiers, visit Khreshchatyk Street and Maidan

Nezalezhnosti at noon to watch the March of the Undeclared – a parade by soldiers, war veterans, doctors, chaplains and volunteers.

There will also be flower-laying ceremonies at the monuments to Ukrainian national poet Taras Shevchenko, Ukraine's first president Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Heavenly Hundred – the EuroMaidan Revolution protesters gunned down in Kyiv by the security forces of the ex-President Viktor Yanukovich.

4. Run in Vyshyvankas

Sports lovers and patriots alike won't want to miss one of this Independence Day's main sport events – a race in which the competitors wear traditional Ukrainian embroidered skirts, or vyshyvankas. The Run in Vyshyvankas will start at Rusanivka Quay at 9 a.m. This charity event aims to raise money for athletic equipment for Kyiv's schools. Runners can compete at distances of 5,000 meters, 10,000 meters and

500 meters. Registration is available at <http://vyshyvanka.club/>. The registration fee is Hr 350, but runners in vyshyvankas enter for free.

5. Independence Festival

Independence Festival will be held at Kyiv's Parkovka recreation area not far from the Ocean Plaza shopping mall. The event's program includes various music concerts – Ukrainian music bands The Velvet Sun, Ody v Canoe, Vivienne Mort and Gapochka will perform their top hits on Parkovka's stage from 11 a.m. until 12 a.m.

Festival visitors will also be able to try street food and browse for souvenirs. Those who love Ukrainian literature will get the chance to listen to lectures given by famous Ukrainian writers and poets, including Liubko Deresh, Artem Polezhaka, Ella Yevtushenko, and many others.

The festival starts at 11 a.m. and will last until midnight. Tickets are available at website karabas.com and cost Hr 150-350. ■

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Visitors attend the 60th annual flower festival at Kyiv's Spivoche Pole Park on Aug. 22, 2015. This year's festival will feature 3D representations in flowers of famous Ukrainians. (UNIAN)

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Eurasia Foundation (EF), a US-based international development organization promoting good governance reform and civil society development, is accepting applications for various positions for the USAID-funded Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration and Services (TAPAS) Activity.


The purpose of TAPAS is to financially support Ukrainian citizens and the Government of Ukraine in reducing or eliminating corruption in key public administration functions and services and build trust of Ukrainians in their government based on demonstrated transparency, accountability and improved services. The activity will focus on three areas: 1) large scale use of electronic procurement in Ukraine; 2) an effective Open Data program; and 3) transparent and efficient public services in the form of eServices.

The deadline for applications is September 9, 2016 (applications reviewed on a rolling basis). All positions are full-time and located in Kyiv.

EF is recruiting for the following positions:

- Finance & Contracts Manager
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- Technology Advisor
- Capacity Strengthening Specialist
- Human Resources & Office Manager
- Open Data Assistant
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For more information, including on how to apply, please refer to www.eurasia.org/CareerOpportunities or www.kyivpost.com/payment/classifieds/.



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Activists: Government sabotaging anti-graft measures

BY OLEG SUKHOV
SUKHOV@KYIVPOST.COM

Civic activists say that corrupt officials have gained several victories in a campaign to thwart reforms.

The counter-offensive has included an attack on the independence of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine and the derailing of an electronic asset declaration system for public officials.

President Petro Poroshenko's supporters have denied accusations of sabotage, while his spokespeople, Sviatoslav Tsegolko and Andriy Zhigulin, as usual did not reply to requests for comment.

The authorities' actions amount to overturning goals of the EuroMaidan Revolution, reformist lawmaker Sergii Leshchenko said on Aug. 17 at a rally protesting the alleged torture by prosecutors of National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine staff.

"What's going on now is a counter-revolution launched by corrupt officials," said Leshchenko, who is a lawmaker from the Poroshenko Bloc. Those in power "are trying to limit all of the anti-corruption bodies that we've been creating over the past year, and make them impotent."

Torture scandal

Leshchenko said on Aug. 17 that lawmaker Oleksandr Hranovsky, a key ally of the president, was planning to file a motion with the Constitutional Court to strip the anti-graft bureau of part of its powers.

The bureau on Aug. 15 released testimony by two employees who said they had been tortured by prosecutors from the prosecutorial department headed by Volodymyr

Hutsulyak and Dmytro Sus. The department has been accused of fabricating political cases on behalf of Hranovsky and Poroshenko's grey cardinal Ihor Kononenko, although they deny the accusations.

The bureau employees said the prosecutors hit them in the ribs, necks, jaws and legs, as well as threatened to flay them and to cut out their eyes with a knife.

The two employees were conducting surveillance of prosecutors in a corruption case and had to call in the bureau's special force unit to release them.

Sus and Hutsulyak denied the allegations, saying that officers from the bureau had beaten them up.

Leshchenko wrote on Facebook on Aug. 18 that the alleged torture was the prosecutors' revenge for the bureau's bribery case against Judge Mykola Chaus, who is linked to Hranovsky. Earlier this month Sus also raided the bureau's premises, accusing it of illegal wiretapping.

Prosecutor General Yuriy Lutsenko defended the prosecutors at a news briefing on Aug. 18, saying that they "are not devils," and the bureau's staff "are not angels."

Lutsenko argued that there was evidence of violations of the law by both parties to the conflict.

The torture cases opened by the bureau against the prosecutors, and the battery cases started by the Prosecutor General's Office against the bureau will be sent to the Security Service of Ukraine, which will act as an arbiter, Lutsenko said. The service's objectivity is questioned, however, since it is headed by Poroshenko and Hranovsky loyalists.

Lutsenko also ignored demands by civic activists to fire or suspend



Vitaliy Shabunin of the Anti-Corruption Action Center holds a poster which reads: "The anti-corruption bureau jails corrupt officials, prosecutors torture bureau executives and ordinary citizens" in front of the Prosecutor General's Office in Kyiv on Aug. 17. (Anastasia Vlasova)

Hutsulyak and Sus, who has admitted using a \$40,000 luxury car.

"The main thing didn't happen – people who tortured the bureau employees were not suspended," Vitaly Shabunin, head of the Anti-Corruption Action Center's executive board, told the Kyiv Post. "Lutsenko took a clear stance – to protect Sus and Co., in the same way he defended Kostyantyn Kulik (a military prosecutor charged with graft). Instead of cleansing the prosecutor's office, Lutsenko has chosen to protect the old clans."

Lutsenko has so far failed to fulfill his promise to fire corrupt prosecutors.

Transparency International Ukraine and the Reanimation Package of Reforms also said in

a statement on Aug. 18 that the prosecutor's office had not made any substantial progress in graft cases against ex-President Viktor Yanukovich and his associates, two-and-a-half years after he fled the country. In May, Lutsenko gave his subordinates a three-month deadline to make progress, but so far not a single Yanukovich-era corruption case has been sent to court.

Declaration saga

Another setback came as the State Service for Government Communications on Aug. 12 refused to certify the electronic declaration system, arguing that it did not comply with technical requirements. The electronic declarations are a major anti-graft tool and a precondition for

visa-free travel to Europe.

The National Agency for Preventing Corruption went ahead and launched the uncertified system on Aug. 15. As a result, punishing officials for lying in declarations became impossible, since evidence from the uncertified system will be inadmissible by the courts. Moreover, officials will be able to hide and legalize their corrupt wealth.

The failure is likely to prevent further Western aid to Ukraine.

As the scandal escalated, the National Agency for Preventing Corruption on Aug. 18 postponed the launch until Sept. 1. The system is expected to be certified by the State Service for Government Communications by then.

Those responsible for sabotaging the launch have not been fired.

Poroshenko, head of the National Agency for Preventing Corruption Natalia Korchak, and head of the State Agency for Government Communications Leonid Yevdochenko, have been blamed for the fiasco, although they deny responsibility. Korchak and Yevdochenko are protégés of Oleksandr Turchynov, secretary of the National Security and Defense Council.

Leshchenko said on Aug. 17 that "the Presidential Administration has done its best for two years to make sure there is no criminal responsibility for lying in declarations."

"This was the fifth attempt to kill electronic declarations. I hope that the president and his entourage will not try to kill them once again (on Sept. 1), because a sixth attempt will lead to economic collapse and bury the dream of a visa-free regime," Shabunin said. ■

Bayer: Ukrainians have had a profound influence on Russia

Bayer from page 5

artist who trained in St. Petersburg with Ivan Bilibin, designed the Ukrainian emblem, its first hryvnia banknotes and Ukrainian postage stamps during the brief rule of hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky.

It is extraordinary how much if the early Soviet literature in Russian was created by people who were born, grew up and developed their literary styles in Ukraine, especially in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa. They were interconnected personally as well as artistically, forming life-long friendships and intermarrying. The contribution of Ukrainian-born or educated writers, painters and musicians to the Russian culture is impossible to overestimate, and it continues to this day.

Ukrainian influence extends also to politics. It is a known fact that the government in Russia is dominated by the "St. Petersburg Mafia" - men with whom Vladimir Putin grew up, learned judo, served in the KGB or

was part of the dacha cooperative "Ozero" - The Lake. However, it is equally impressive how many in the positions of power or influence hail from Ukraine or have Ukrainian roots. Putin's immediate entourage include men named Tymchenko, Kovalchuk and Chayka.

A key loyalist, Valentina Matviyenko, was born in Ukraine. She was brought to Moscow and made President of the Council of the Federation in 2012, when Putin was still toying with the idea of leaving politics and bestowing real power on Dmitry Medvedev. Matviyenko was replaced as Governor of St. Petersburg by another person with Ukrainian roots, Georgy Poltavchenko. Meanwhile, Ukrainian-born Irina Yarovaya, a hugely visible presence in the Russian Duma, has been entrusted by the Kremlin with the task of introducing some of the craziest legislation of the past two years.

The present-day Western concept

of nationality remains controversial, especially in the ex-colonial powers. In France and the Netherlands anti-immigrant rhetoric is on the rise. In Britain, Brexit was in a large measure born of the dissatisfaction with a number of people of color who claim that they are now British.

While in the West the nationalists want to expel various alien citizens and restore ethnic purity, in Russia the post-colonial syndrome has received a very strange twist. Many Russians have become determined to deny Ukrainians their national identity, history and even language. They claim that Ukrainians are basically Russians who speak a dialect and that Ukraine is an integral part of historic Russia. One Russian nationalist I have talked to pointed to the example of Italy, claiming that the fact that Neapolitans speak a dialect doesn't make Campania any less a part of Italy.

To me, however, such Russian claims sound more as if the English

would decide that, since London was founded by the Romans, there is no such nation as Italians and the Italian language is but a corrupted version of English.

Perhaps this preposterous concept owes a great deal to the fact that people of Ukrainian origin play such an important role all aspects of Russian life. It is notable how many people with Ukrainian roots or last names have been virulently critical of the Maidan revolution and vociferously opposed to the Ukrainian government's goal to join Europe. Writer Eduard Limonov (Savenko), who was raised in Kharkiv, has long been denying the existence of a separate Ukrainian nation while crooner Iosif Kobzon, who was born in the Donbas, provides material support to the terrorists destroying his native region.

There is a myriad of such people, both in the public eye and not. I have a cousin, a son of a Ukrainian father, who spent the first year after the

annexation of Crimea posting supposedly witty memes about Ukrainian leaders and Ukraine in general.

While personal motivations in such cases are best left to the medical science, Russia's policy of trying to hold on to Ukraine and to hitch it permanently to the rump of the collapsing Russian empire is insane not only for Ukraine but for Russia, as well.

The reason Ukrainian-born and educated people have been so influential for Russia is because Ukraine has always been a conduit for Western ideas. It acted as a window to Europe, along with St. Petersburg.

Keeping Ukraine underdeveloped and backward would exacerbate Russia's own backwardness and keep it deeply provincial. The best thing Russia could now do is to help Ukraine to rise and achieve its potential as a leading economic and political power in Eastern Europe. In the long run, that would undoubtedly benefit Russia as well. ■

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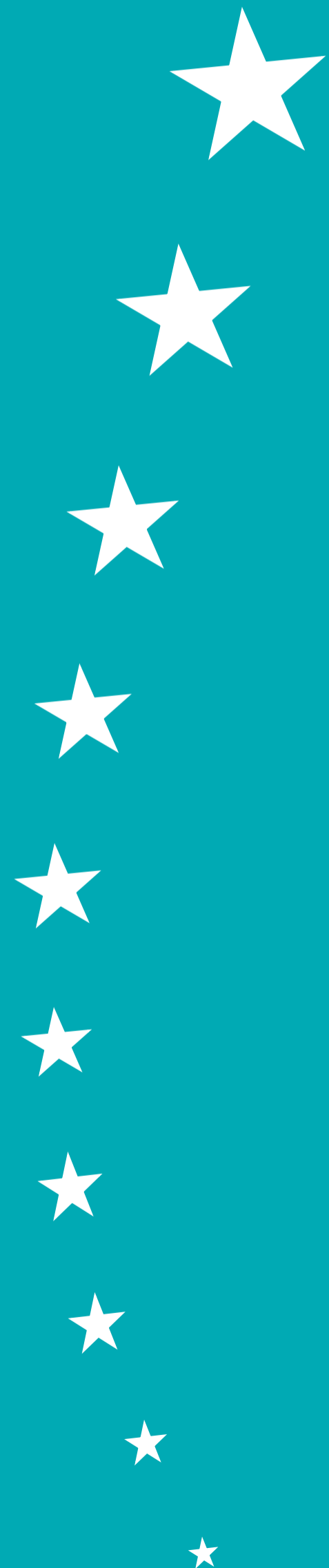


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Recollections of independence, from those who made it happen

BY YULIANA ROMANYSHYN
 AND ISOBEL KOSHIW

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In the late 1980s, Moscow's influence in Ukraine waned because of the "glasnost" and "perestroika," the policies of openness and restructuring introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet Union's last secretary general.

Dissidents in Ukraine promoted the Ukrainian language and awareness of Soviet crimes, including the Holodomor of 1932-33 and the cover-up of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power plant explosion. Even traditionally passive workers in Ukraine's industrial heartland staged mass protests.

In Moscow, the Communist Party was further challenged by elections of non-communist candidates to the Congress of People's Deputies in 1989.

Sensing the end may be near, Soviet Union officials started resigning en masse.

Non-Communist Party candidates competed in parliamentary elections on March 4, 1990 in Kyiv for the first time in 70 years. Upon election, formed the Democratic Bloc, joined by defecting communists. In July 1990, Ukraine's new parliament declared Ukrainian sovereignty, but stopped short of independence. However, that declaration was only a year away.

In the year between declaring sovereignty and independence, Ukrainians extracted concessions from Moscow while support for full independence grew.

Then in August 1991, hardliners within the Kremlin organized an unsuccessful coup against Gorbachev. With Moscow in chaos, Ukrainian politicians seized the opportunity. In a tense session on Aug. 24, 1991, Ukraine's deputies voted 346 to 1, with three abstentions, to declare Ukrainian independence. The vote was later ratified on Dec. 1, 1991 by 92 percent of the population in a nationwide referendum.

Here are the words of some of the key people involved in the momentous change:



Levko Lukyanenko

was a Soviet dissident imprisoned for 15 years for creating an underground separatist organization. Upon his release from prison in 1976, he was a

founding member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, a human rights organization, for which he was imprisoned again for 10 years. Lukyanenko was elected to parliament in 1990 and was responsible for writing the Declaration of Ukrainian Independence, which was voted for by parliament in 1991.

"Of the whole period, the most important moment for me was Aug. 24, 1991, when the Ukrainian Rada voted for the independence of Ukraine. After the vote, I walked out of the Rada to greet a huge crowd of maybe 20,000 people. There were so many people. They lifted me up. They thanked me. And I was so happy because what I had wanted and fought for all my life had happened. After that, we all went to the Maidan and again I spoke in front of a huge crowd of people, and by the evening on Sofiivska Square there was a meeting of all Ukrainians. People from all of the 25 oblasts came to Kyiv, and all the radio stations in Ukraine broadcast me reading out the declaration of independence to all of Ukraine. This for me was the greatest celebration and happiness.

"Things didn't go the way they should have, because it turned out the communists weren't Ukrainian patriots. They formed clans, and instead of the process of privatization, they started to steal everything for themselves. They stole the facto-



People hoist Soviet dissident and Ukrainian lawmaker Levko Lukyanenko following the proclamation of Ukraine as an independent state, outside the building of the Ukrainian parliament in Kyiv on Aug. 24, 1991. Ukraine celebrates its 25th Independence Day on Aug. 24. (UNIAN)

ries and plants. They ruined the factories and people were left without jobs. It's very unfortunate. And this meant that Ukraine didn't become a democracy, rather it's about who has more money."



Leonid Kravchuk

was a Communist Party ideologue before being made the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic just before the collapse. Kravchuk

managed to successfully hold power during Ukraine's transition period, elected as the first president of Ukraine (1991-1994) in elections held in tandem with the referendum on independence in 1991.

"I was anticipating a new life because I knew the old system all too well. I was one of the leaders of the old Soviet Ukraine. I saw the difficulties people faced. They had no opportunities. I knew how to manage people, and together with them I started to build the new state.

"Unfortunately the expectations that I had couldn't all be fulfilled, because there are lots of problems which aren't dependent on Ukraine's actions. Like, for instance, Russia's war against Ukraine today. The annexation of Crimea. I couldn't have predicted back then that it would happen in 23 years time. The most important thing that we have is that the question of whether the state is independent is resolved. We have a state, and soon we will mark the 25th anniversary.

"Ukraine is developing. It's difficult. There are problems.

"My most memorable moment from that period was when the Ukrainian parliament voted for the Declaration of Ukrainian Independence. You had to be there in the hall. The deputies were hugging each other, singing, lifting each other up. They celebrated on the streets. Lots of people came out onto the streets. Everyone was singing and celebrating. The act was supported by the majority of the parliament and so was constitutional. The event was the most striking moment of my entire life."



Ivan Drach

was a Ukrainian poet and political activist. Like Viacheslav Chornovil, Drach was born in Kyiv Oblast and devel-

oped his nationalist ideas at university, where he associated with other dissident-minded students. After a trip to Moscow in the early 1960s, Drach wrote his first anti-Soviet poems, but later, when several dissidents were arrested, he wrote an open letter in which he said he regretted his anti-Soviet activities. During "glasnost," he founded Rukh along with Chornovil. The organization campaigned initially for greater freedoms, and was later key in campaigning for independence.

"I was in Moscow, listening on the radio what was going on in Verkhovna Rada in Ukraine. I saw how the double-headed eagle had been created around the Russian Parliament. And I recognized that

this double-headed eagle would be pecking Ukraine much longer than next quarter of a century.

"I pay a lot of respect to the events of that day, as a people's movement, which I headed at that time, did all it could to declare independence. I celebrate this day every year - 25 years in a row. I would like to recommend (the next generations) to rely on their brains and strength, and do not believe in the fairy tales that our generation believe in, while embracing this independence."

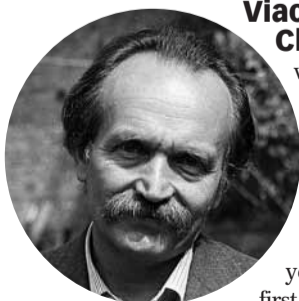
Ivan Plyushch

was a Soviet deputy and was subsequently elected a deputy and speaker of the Ukrainian



parliament. Plyushch authored the Declaration of Sovereignty that the Ukrainian parliament passed in 1990. Plyushch died in 2014, at the age of 72. This is an extract from a video interview he gave in 1996 to Ukrainian Catholic University as part of a project on Ukrainian history from 1988-1991:

"The most important event was the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine. It was on July 16, 1990, and it was the beginning. First, came the will of the highest body, the Verkhovna Rada, to be independent. Second, came the Declaration of Independence of Ukraine on Aug. 24, 1991. And third was the independence referendum on Dec. 1, 1991."



Viacheslav Chornovil

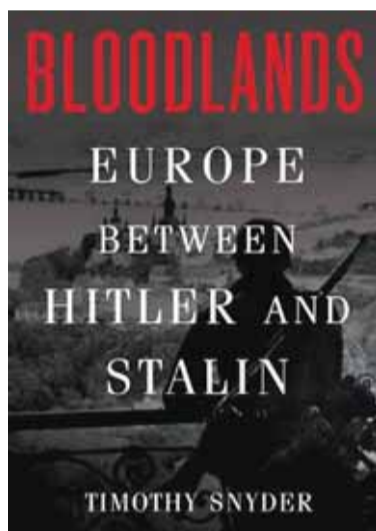
was a prominent Soviet dissident, imprisoned three times for a total of eight years. The first time was for documenting the

illegal imprisonment of Ukrainian intellectuals. The second time was for publishing an underground magazine called the Ukrainian Informer and being involved in "separatist" activity. The final time was for "attempted rape," charges that

25 great English-language books about Ukraine

BY OKSANA GRYTSENKO
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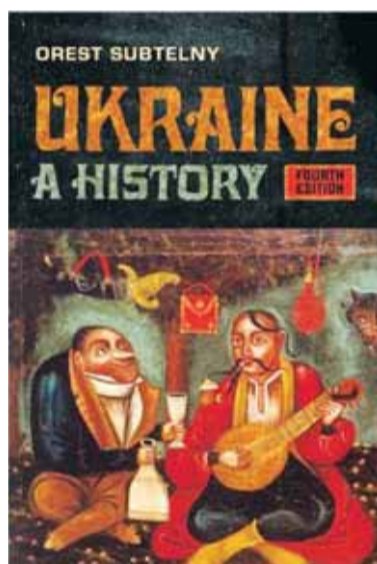
Ukraine has inspired dozens of authors to write histories, memoirs, fictional novels and even advice on finding a Ukrainian romantic partner. The Kyiv Post has picked out 10 must-reads about Ukraine and Ukrainians that have been published in English, as well as 15 other books by authors who have contributed to the growing library of books about Ukraine in the English language.



Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin, by Timothy Snyder

An absolute must-read for everybody interested in the modern history of Ukraine, as well as Poland and Belarus. Yale historian Timothy Snyder names these ter-

ritories "the bloodlands," because 14 million people were killed here between 1930 and 1945. The victims included Ukrainian peasants killed during Soviet dictator Josef Stalin's Holodomor artificial famine, Soviet prisoners of war starved to death in prison camps, and Jewish people killed by the Nazis. Snyder points out the striking parallels between two dictators – the Soviet Union's Stalin and Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler. "Hitler and Stalin thus shared a certain politics of tyranny: they brought about catastrophes, blamed the enemy of their choice, and then used the death of millions to make the case that their policies were necessary or desirable," Snyder writes.



Ukraine: A History, by Orest Subtelny

Published in 1988, this book by a

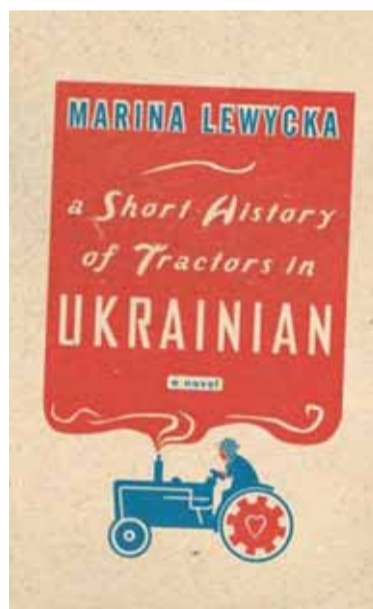
professor of history and political science at York University, Canada, is still one of the best works on Ukraine's history from the early ages up to the mid-2000s. Used by many students as a history study book, this work is essential for anyone interested in learning an objective history of Ukraine, without Russian, Soviet or modern Ukrainian ideological distortions.

Everything is Illuminated, by Jonathan Safran Foer

A young Jewish-American, the author's namesake, travels to Ukraine to find the woman who saved his grandfather from the Nazis during World War II. He is accompanied by a Ukrainian translator, Alex, Alex's grandfather, and a mon-



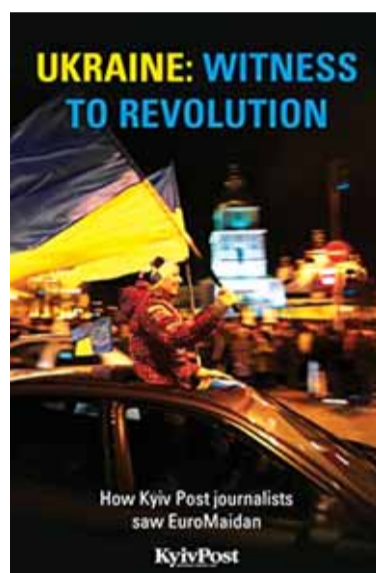
grel dog in a simultaneously comic and tragic journey into a hidden past. Published in 2002, the book was adapted in 2005 into a film of the same name, starring the star of Lord of the Rings, Elijah Wood, and Eugene Hütz, Ukrainian-born singer and the frontman of the Gypsy punk band Gogol Bordello.



A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian, by Marina Lewycka

Although the story takes place in Peterborough in England, most of its heroes are Ukrainian emigres to the United Kingdom, either of the second generation or newcomers. Born in the U.K. to a family of Ukrainian descent, sisters Vera and Nadezhda try to foil the marriage of their father to Valentina, a mail-order bride from

Ukraine. Published in 2005, this funny debut novel by Lewycka was loved by many in the U.K. and Ukraine.

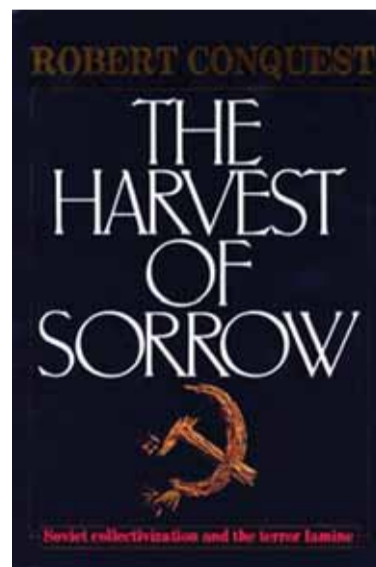


Ukraine: Witness to Revolution, by Kyiv Post journalists

This Kindle book contains first-hand accounts by the Kyiv Post journalists about the Euromaidan Revolution. The Kyiv Post produced reams of reports during the three-and-a-half dramatic months from late November 2013 to February 2014, when Ukrainians braved icy weather to rally against the corrupt former president, Viktor Yanukovich. The Kindle book includes the personal impressions and stories of the Kyiv Post's reporters about a revolution that changed Ukraine forever. The journalist's essays are weaved into a concise but detailed account of the events of the EuroMaidan Revolution, and the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.



People attend a book fair during the 22nd Forum of Publishers in Lviv, September 10, 2015. There is a growing library of books on Ukraine in English to help foreigners learn about the country. (UNIAN)



The Harvest of Sorrow, by Robert Conquest

First published in 1986, this book by British historian Robert Conquest was written with the assistance of the U.S. historian James Mace, who was later acclaimed in Ukraine as one of the best researchers of the Holodomor famine. After setting out an in-depth study of the Stalin-era collectivization of 1929-31 and the man-made famine in 1932-33,

the authors proved that the famine was a case of genocide against the Ukrainian nation, which took away millions of lives. The book was awarded the Shevchenko National Prize, the highest cultural award in Ukraine, in 1994.

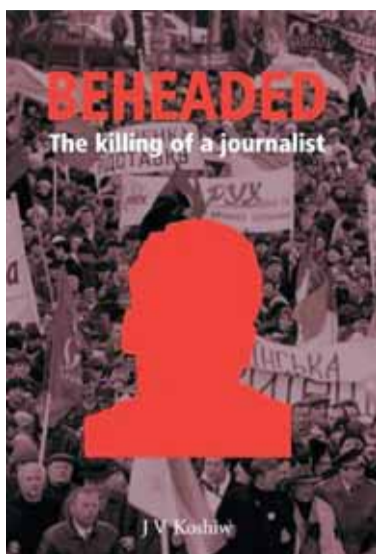


Dream Land, by Lily Hyde

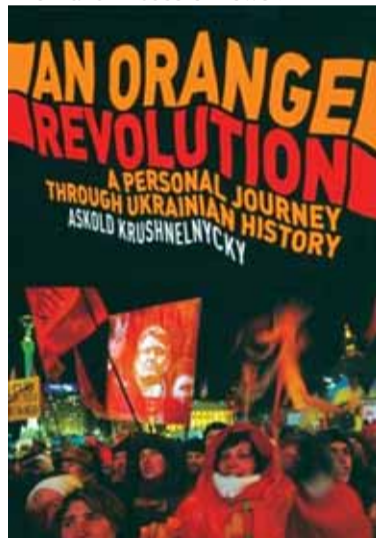
In the form of a family story, British author and former Kyiv Post journalist Lily Hyde tells the story of the return of thousands of Crimean Tatars to Crimea, the land of their ancestors, or, as they call it, the “dream land.”

Beheaded: The Killing of a Journalist, by Jaroslav Koshiw

This book, by another former Kyiv Post journalist and editor, Jaroslav Koshiw, investigates one of the grimmest stories in independent Ukraine



– the kidnapping and murder of independent journalist Georgiy Gongadze in 2000. Koshiw has also written other books about contemporary Ukrainian events and politics, including “MH17: The story of the shooting down of the Malaysian airliner” and “Abuse of Power.”

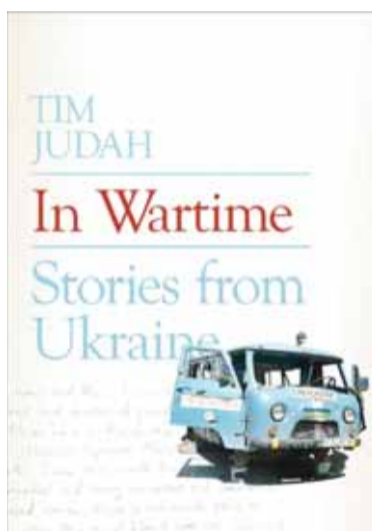


An Orange Revolution: A Personal Journey Through Ukrainian History, by Askold Krushelnycky

In this book, Askold Krushelnytsky, the Kyiv Post's chief editor in 1998, vividly describes the events of Orange Revolution, the mass public uprising against the rigged presidential elections in 2004. He also gives a brief history of the Ukrainian nation itself, from its earliest times to the present.

In Wartime: Stories from Ukraine, by Tim Judah

The Balkans correspondent for the Economist, Tim Judah traveled from the west to the east of Ukraine in 2014 covering Russia's war against Ukraine. The result of his observations and interviews, this book pays special attention to the human cost of war. ■



15 other authors, works of note:

Anders Aslund, a Swedish economist, has written “Ukraine: What Went Wrong and How To Fix It” and “How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy.”

Alexei Bayer, a Kyiv Post columnist who lives in New York, writes thrillers, including “Murder at the Dacha” and “The Latchkey Murders.”

Alex Frishberg, a lawyer who divides his time between Ukraine and America, has written “Doing Business in Ukraine,” “The Steel Barons” and “An International Love Affair.”

Marvin Kalb, a U.S. journalist, has written “Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War.”

Andrey Kurkov and Sam Taylor, are the authors who wrote “Ukraine Diaries,” a firsthand account of the EuroMaidan Revolution

Taras Kuzio is a British citizen based in Toronto, Canada, who has written several books on Ukraine, including the 2015 “Ukraine: Democratization, Corruption, and the New Russian Imperialism.”

Paul R. Magosci, the chair of Ukrainian studies at the University of Toronto, has written “A History of Ukraine” and other books.

David R. Marples, a Canadian historian and professor at the University of Alberta in Canada, has written several books, including “The Collapse of the Soviet Union” and “Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine.”

Alexander J. Motyl, a political science professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey and a prolific columnist, has written “Dilemmas of Independence: Ukraine after Totalitarianism” and other scholarly works on Ukraine.

Serhii Plokhy is the Mykhailo Hrushevsky professor of Ukrainian history at Harvard University and director of the university's Ukrainian Research Institute. Recently he has written “The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine” and “The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union.”

Anna Reid, a journalist and author, wrote “Borderland,” one of the first books about Ukraine and its history to be published after Ukraine gained independence.

Richard Sakwa, a professor of Russian and European politics at the University of Kent, is the author of “Frontline Ukraine,” a book detailing the origins and background to the Ukraine crisis.

Alex Shaw has written several crime thrillers that, while not exclusively set in Ukraine, will be familiar to readers in the region.

Andrew Wilson is a United Kingdom author and senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. He has written numerous books on politics in Ukraine and the region, including “The Ukrainians,” “Ukraine's Orange Revolution,” “Ukraine Crisis” and “Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World.”

Serhy Yekelchuk, a Ukrainian-Canadian historian, wrote “Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation,” detailing the events of Ukraine 2004 Orange Revolution.

Advertisement

ELEKS, a leading Ukrainian IT company, marks 25 years of software engineering innovation



Ruslan Zakharchenko,
 Chief Executive Officer at ELEKS

ELEKS, a leading software engineering firm headquartered in Lviv, Ukraine, which serves customers globally, celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Ruslan Zakharchenko, Chief Executive Officer at ELEKS, talks about the company's inception, development and recent achievements.

Your company is the same age as independent Ukraine. How did ELEKS start in 1991, and what has changed since then?

Twenty-five years ago, the IT market in Ukraine didn't even exist. Basically, ELEKS started as a product company, with the idea of solving critical challenges through the application of science and technology. When the captive Soviet states finally became independent countries, the electrical power grid needed to be carved into separate systems for each of the newly-independent states. Oleksiy Skrypnyk, along with his son, also Oleksiy, created DAKAR, a unique product for power system stability analysis, the real-time management of large power systems and load flow analysis. Today, DAKAR is a successful product implemented in more than 20 Eastern European power systems, although it represents only a very minor part of ELEKS' business.

The products we develop range from the software used in filming Hollywood movies to mission-critical systems for agricultural businesses, while our customers include numerous Fortune 500® companies. Among our key projects is CAESAR II, a comprehensive system supporting administration and business processes of import GST, as well as the administration and collection of customs and excise duty for the government of the States of Jersey, UK. Another key project is a high traffic e-commerce solution for one of Europe's largest online retailers, with API for

mobile applications, security, payments, performance, fault-tolerance, and scalability. In the global trade area, we have developed an integrated Credit Risk Management System (CRMS) that streamlines and automates processes related to counterparties, contracts, and risk management.

ELEKS is among the top 10 largest IT firms in Ukraine. How are you different from other companies in your business?

Actually, ELEKS is also one of the world's 100 best outsourcing companies and a top 5 enterprise software development firm, based on independent evaluation by industry organizations. However, ELEKS is not a traditional outsourcing company. In addition to the fact that we have our own software products and focus on the development of technologically complex systems, we have preserved our passion for innovation, through the early adoption and exploration of new technologies.

Our technology experiments have gained wide industry recognition and media coverage. A large customer of ours operating in the financials industry says they had the most

ELEKS provides full-cycle, software product engineering services, from the ideation phase to building finished products to deployment and support. We help businesses innovate and build advanced software products, leveraging technologies such as Data Analytics, the Internet of Things, mobile applications and wearables. ELEKS' delivery organization, consisting of approximately 800 professionals in Ukraine and Poland, is strengthened by a local presence in the U.S. and the UK. More information at eleks.com

success from a research-and-development standpoint with ELEKS. R&D is at the core of our culture, and the products we develop. Not only do we experiment with technologies, but also with business models. As a result, the projects on which our teams work tend to be more leading-edge, technology-forward, business-driven, with a smooth, automated “back office.”

Product development is in our DNA. We did software development for drones as a volunteer project to help the Ukrainian army; this led to the creation of our newly established unit, Luftronix, which is entering the U.S. market with this product. We aim to continue collaboration with our partners in the outsourcing space, while continuously introducing new products and moving towards the solutions business model. It is a natural move, as in today's market more and more customers want to deal with a creative technology partner focused

on solving business and technology challenges, rather than a staff augmentation provider.

To support the implementation of our strategy, ELEKS' delivery organization is finalizing a number of technology accelerators, including an Enterprise Platforms Suite, as well as additional initiatives to help us scale, monitor and manage a large number of projects. These will be included into our “Enterprise-Out-of-the-Box” approach, which supports our transition into the development of scaled distributed enterprise solutions and cloud-ready global solutions.

People are our greatest asset, so ELEKS puts great emphasis on the development of core professional competencies: project management, business analysis, user experience, software architecture, data science, etc. Our people are continuously developing a better understanding of business acumen. ELEKS has created an environment which provides broad opportunities for professional development, training and improvement, while the driving force is challenging work that keeps employees interested and motivated.

You were appointed CEO of ELEKS in November 2014. Have you achieved any of the set goals and what is in your plans?

In the course of 2016 ELEKS expanded its portfolio with several enterprise level customers in the retail, logistics and agriculture industries. As a growing and customer-oriented business, we are continually expanding our presence in the U.S. and UK markets, as well as in Europe, with plans to strengthen the office in Rzeszów and expand to Kraków.

My primary goal is to implement our strategy with a focus on high technology, using various business models, while growing our core business at a rate above the market average. Not building an empire, but a strong, agile, healthy and profitable business which has space for innovation.

In my view, there are two core components to success - passion and science. I strongly believe nothing is impossible to achieve if you are persistent, passionate,

willing to take more responsibility, have a clear vision of your goal and invest your time and strength into education.

How is your business active in its social responsibility?

In addition to our volunteer projects for the Ukrainian army, including an automated medical record system for military hospitals, our main field of involvement is IT education and community development.

At our corporate university we create new educational opportunities for talented technology students, launching training camps in software engineering, DevOps, QA, UX, Business Analysis and other topics; another opportunity is a software academy for post-combat veterans to help them start in IT. Our headquarters in Lviv is proud to host a department of Lviv Polytechnic University, with our top experts as lecturers, and several of our executives as lecturers or board members of programs at the Lviv Business School at the Ukrainian Catholic University. ELEKS is a co-founder of Lviv IT Cluster and a co-organizer of Lviv IT Arena, the most successful IT event in Ukraine, and an organizer of its Product Stream.

Please accept our congratulations on the 25th anniversary of ELEKS. Is there anything you'd like to add as a conclusion?

In our collaboration, among all various technologies and business models, we employ the principle of partnership, both internally in the organization and with our clients. We aim to help our customers innovate through the development of advanced software products that matter, and their success is our greatest motivation. We welcome on board talented people who are ready to work on complex, challenging projects to reach new heights and contribute to the development of Ukrainian high tech industry. And happy Independence Day to all of us.



25 top movies about Ukraine

BY VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA
MELKOZEROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Cinematography provides a vivid insight into Ukrainian culture, history and mentality. But while Ukraine's filmmakers in Soviet times were faced by the constraints of Soviet censorship, in independent Ukraine budget restrictions made it difficult to get movies about Ukraine onto cinema screens.

Nevertheless, over the years Ukrainian filmmakers and filmmakers of other nationalities have made dozens of movies that reveal much about Ukraine, and are well worth a watch by both Ukrainians and students of Ukrainian culture. Here, the Kyiv Post reviews some of the most important and influential of these movies, and lists the 25 must-see films about the country.

Ideological control

Movie critic and TV host Volodymyr Voytenko told the Kyiv Post that the first Ukrainian directors were granted a measure of creative freedom only in the early years of the Soviet Union, in the 1920s. After that, from the beginning of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's reign of fear in the 1930s and until his death in 1953, the Soviet propaganda machine put strict control on Ukrainian movies.

"There was political and ideological control," said Voytenko. "The director was allowed to make a movie only to socialist realism standards. The government formed a historical portrait of the Ukrainian nation as the one that played a secondary, less important role in the story of Soviet Union and the Russian empire."



The Hutsul wedding scene from the 1964 movie "Shadows of the Forgotten Ancestors," by Sergei Paradzhanov. (Courtesy)

Ukrainian filmmaker Mykhailo Illienko agreed, saying that Russia's leading position in the Soviet Union meant that Ukrainian characters were only allowed secondary roles in movie screenplays.

"It was impossible to make a movie with a strong Ukrainian hero in the times of the Soviet Union. Only a Russian could be the heroic protagonist, while Ukrainians had to be shown as silly, comical characters – or traitors," recalled Illienko.

However, Illienko said that despite Soviet censorship, Ukrainian movie directors still managed to convey hidden messages.

Dovzhenko's realism

The 1930 epic drama "Zemlya" (Earth) made by Ukrainian director Oleksandr Dovzhenko, shows Ukrainian Soviet youths fighting against kulaks, or wealthy landlords, in 1920-1930.

"In fact it is a drama of Ukrainian

villagers, forced to survive under the cataclysmic conditions brought about by the Soviets, several years before the tremendous holocaust (of the Holodomor, or Stalin's artificial famine)," said Voytenko. In 1958, Dovzhenko's "Earth" was voted one of the top 12 best films in history during an international cinema forum in Brussels.

Dovzhenko invented his own unique cinematic style of "film poem," using symbolic frames and rhythmic editing. In his 1930 silent film "Zemlya," Dovzhenko showed a nude figure the first time in history of Ukrainian and Soviet cinematography. That edgy realism earned the distinguished director the ire of Soviet cinema critics.

Carpathian Romeo, Juliet

Voytenko said that Soviet ideological pressure relaxed in the 1960s. Ukrainian and Soviet cinematographers returned to plots that included national and historical elements.

In 1964, Armenian director Sergei Paradzhanov's "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" screened a movie adaptation of the Mykhailo Kotsubinskiy

1911 novel of the same name. It is a Ukrainian Romeo and Juliet story, set in a Carpathian Mountain village.

"This film shows all the beauty of the life, culture and customs of the inhabitants of the Ukrainian part of the Carpathians," said Voytenko.

The film was a lightening rod for dissidents: During the film's premier in Kyiv, Ukrainian writers Vasyl Stus and Ivan Dzyuba protested against political repression against the Ukrainian intelligentsia.

But the Soviet system soon struck back: In 1973, director Paradzhanov was arrested, accused of sodomy, and sentenced to five years in prison. Many said that Paradzhanov was the first openly gay person in Ukraine. In 1977, Paradzhanov was released following international pressure.

During Soviet times, it was impossible to raise money for a film without the support of the Communist Party. And if a director did manage to make and screen an unauthorized movie, the Soviets banned it.

Rebirth of cinema

With the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukrainian filmmaking industry became freer, but also much poorer.

The financial drought lasted into 2010. Now the State Film Agency gets between Hr 100-300 million every year.

"The new technologies gave extra possibilities for independent filmmakers, because they made the movie-making process faster and cheaper," said Voytenko.

The technological revolution in film-making made it practical in recent years for independent directors to document Ukraine's fast-paced political developments.

"Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom" was an Oscar finalist in 2015 in the documentary category. It was directed by Evgeny Afineevsky, an American of Russian origin, and depicted the EuroMaidan Revolution that forced Viktor Yanukovich to flee as president on Feb. 22, 2014.

Other noteworthy recent contributions include "The Tribe," a 2014 feature film by Ukrainian director Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy about love, crime and hate in a Ukrainian boarding school for deaf teenagers.

The resurgence in the industry has also seen some bigger-budget movies hit the screens: "Unbroken" in 2015, which was screened in Russia as "The Battle for Sevastopol," is a \$5 million biopic about the exploits of Ukrainian sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko in World War II. It has since become a Ukrainian-Russian blockbuster.

"The only problem Ukrainian cinematographers have now is the US monopoly on the business. It is still rather hard for Ukrainian movies to compete with U.S.-made blockbusters at the box office," said Voytenko. ■

Man with the Movie Camera, Dziga Vertov	1929	GENERAL DURATION MORE THAN 34 HOURS	2010	My Joy, Sergey Loznitsa
Zemlya (Earth), Oleksandr Dovzhenko	1930		2011	Cross, Marina Vroda
Za dvumya zaytsami (Chasing two hares), Viktor Ivanov	1961		2012	The Fire Crosser, Mykhailo Illienko
Shadows of forgotten ancestors, Sergei Paradzhanov	1964		2013	The Common Thing, Valentyn Vasyanovych
Zakhar Berkut, Leonid Osyka	1971		2013	Shadows of unforgotten ancestors, Lubomyr Levytskiy
Propala Hramota, Borys Ivchenko	1972	MAIN CHARACTER OF THE FILM WITH 1 UKRAINIAN SIGN LANGUAGE	2014	Guide, Oles Sanin
Vavilon XX, Ivan Mykolaychuk	1979		2014	The Tribe, Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy
Swan Lake. The Zone, Yuriy Illienko	1989	SILENT FILMS 3 BLACK & WHITE	2015	The Battle for Sevastopol, Sergey Mokritsky
Hunger-33, Oles Yanchuk	1991		2015	Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom, Evgeny Afineevsky
Fuchzhou, Mykhailo Illienko	1994	MOST COMMON GENRES Comedy Drama War History Romance Thriller Documentary Biography Adventure Detective Music Crime Fantasy Short Animation Horror Mystery Action Sci-Fi Fantasy Romance Drama War History Crime Comedy Thriller Documentary Biography Adventure Detective Music Crime Fantasy Short Animation Horror Mystery Action Sci-Fi	2015	Cerise, Jérôme Enrico
Syomiy Marshrut (The Seventh Route), Mykhailo Illienko	1998		2016	The Turtledove Nest (Gnizdo Gorlytsi), Taras Tkachenko
With Fire and Sword, Jerzy Hoffman	1999		2016	Bitter Harvest, George Mendeluk
Illyuziya strakha (The illusion of fear), Aleksandr Kirienko	2008			
				By Ira Movchan, Kyiv Post Source: http://www.imdb.com



A scene from the 2014 film "The Guide" by Ukrainian director Oles Sanin. (Courtesy)

A list of 25 Ukrainian and foreign movies with fun facts about them. (Graphic by Ira Movchan)-

The Man Who Changed the Rules



By Irina Mirochnik

When it comes to innovations and new technologies in Ukraine, it is likely that people first remember names that are popular and famous all over the world. The names that have changed the rules and a way of life of our modern society, and have given a powerful boost to further development. Henry Ford, Steve Jobs, and the founder of Sony Corporation, Akio Morita, are people who built their businesses by implementing innovative ideas that have come to be used by the entire civilized world.

Ukraine also has its own traditions of doing innovative business, as well as having people who have made a great contribution to the formation of entire sectors of the economy, using their innovative and creative thinking, ambitious knowledge and inventive skills. One of them is a prominent Ukrainian self-made man, Oleksandr Galkin. His life story perfectly illustrates the thesis that our country is rich in extraordinary people, who have been able to achieve their goals and put into life their ideas. Our country has a lot of great business people, but only few of them are real visionaries, who have followed their wildest dreams and can look beyond the horizon.

Oleksandr Galkin was a talented innovator and a businessman who died in the prime of life, but he left behind an important legacy, as well as creating from scratch a modern packaging industry in Ukraine. We use popular and convenient packaging materials every day, but we do not even know that it took a great deal of scientific work to create this product, some inventive insights, and the courage to implement innovative ideas. This person for decades lived and worked searching for new implementations of his ideas, and made breakthroughs in his field time and time again.

The legacy he left is the Ukrplastic Company, which today is one of the most advanced and high-tech companies in the country. It is deservedly among the largest leaders of the packaging industry in Europe. In addition, the company's products are very popular in Asia, the Americas and Africa. While Ukrplastic's 90th anniversary will be next year, it was Galkin who saw breakthrough innovations as the most important way forward for the company. Through his work, it became the leader in the packaging industry, providing high-quality products. I and my husband took part in the development of the company and the industry, so I can understand well how important and crucial was Galkin's contribution to the business. There are perhaps only a few companies in Ukraine that are confident enough to look into the future and at the same time to be a top company in the country.

A man who had an amazing dream

In 2016, a book was published that tells the life story of Galkin. It was written by family members, friends and peers of this talented scientist and a successful businessman. We wanted to give the reader an opportunity to appreciate the full extent of this person. Galkin's path to his achievements was not easy, but his energy, dedication and outstanding intellect made him truly worthy to have followers.

"There are people who come into the world to create. They create not only material or scientific things, but also create the fate of the people, people who are lucky to be around a bright person, learn from him, and feed off his faith in the life and an amazing dream," reads the preface of the book about Galkin.

The future scientist and businessman was born in Petrashevka village, Khmelnytskyi Oblast. From his childhood he took interest in photography and technology, and later he studied at the Kamianets-Podilskyi College of Food Industry. When Galkin graduated from college, he started demonstrating his engineering skills. Namely, while Oleksandr was working on Vinnitsa Confectionery Factory he came up with a new mode of operation for a traditional conveyor system, and this innovative mechanism served the factory for about 30 years until a general modernization was carried out in 2010. His friends from his youth said that during that period he understood that he loved technological innovations and high-precision equipment more than just the technology and the science.

In 1973, Galkin entered the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics at the Kyiv Technological Institute of the Food Industry, and by 1985 he had already defended his PhD thesis and received his PhD in Engineering Science, at the age of just 32.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union was the starting point for many businessmen. Galkin opened a profitable business doing barter trade in crude oil and natural gas, which allowed him to generate his first startup capital. Shortly after, he began working closely with the Ukrainian confectioners, helping them enter international markets. That is when he first decided to get into the packaging business,

as this industry was the most problematic for the Ukrainian confectionery market. Namely, confectioners had to buy packaging products abroad, paying a lot of money for them.

Galkin invested a large sum into the Kyiv Plant of Polymer Materials. At the time, the company manufactured plastic coverings for greenhouses, plastic bags and PVC film. It was obvious to Oleksandr that the plant needed some modernization, as the times and world standards in the packaging industry had substantially changed.

Galkin decided to build a modern high-tech production facility, which would manufacture high-quality products for the consumer just like the world leaders in that business. The successful businessman managed to bring in investment from reputable international banks such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and others. Moreover, he renovated the production line and modernized the plant, developing a unique innovation chain, which provided a source of continuous investment into yet more new technologies and equipment.

It was then that the company received a new name - Ukrplastic, and Galkin decided to develop a completely new packaging material. Therefore, he brought the powerful research centers and institutes in the field of chemistry, biochemistry, Eco Hygiene and toxicology into the development this new packaging material.

In 1999, after several years of the scientific research, Ukrplastic started to produce multilayered plastic sheeting that had a set of unique characteristics, such as a memory effect, excellent thermal insulating characteristics, and which was totally free of the hazardous substances. This invention was even better than its foreign analogues. Moreover, it is still a serious competitor in the global market.

"When I met Galkin, I saw technologies that I knew, but I had never seen them in use before," said the President of World Packaging Organization, Sergio Haberfeld when he first met with Ukrainian pioneer during a visit to Ukraine.

Galkin practically created the packaging industry from scratch in Ukraine, and it remains one of the most dynamic in the country. Overall, during the years of his working career, he developed and implemented about a hundred new types of packaging and packaging materials. Many technologies that developed by Galkin are recognized as innovative all over the world, and some of them have even been implemented at several other companies. The prominent scientist had 22 patents for his inventions.

Ukrplastic always looked ahead to the future of world technology — this was his main strategy. He managed to stay one step ahead of the competitors because of his systematic thinking, careful analysis of market trends, and deep understanding of the scenarios for the development of industry in the future. Ukrplastic always looked ahead to expected demand, and was ready for any changes in market trends.

For example, when at the beginning of the 1998 economic crisis there was demand for UHT milk on the market, the company had already developed a new type of packaging that doubled the shelf life of pasteurized fresh milk. In addition, the production of Doypack plastic bags by Ukrplastic was very successful as well. Galkin saw this new type of packaging at a Japanese exhibitions in 2000. The product was not popular yet, but Galkin could already see its future prospects. Soon Ukrplastic purchased the special equipment for its production. The company also began to develop its own innovative solutions in order to create effective materials for the production of this type of packaging.

One of Galkin's popular breakthroughs caused a real revolution in the industry, namely, that of twist plastic sheets. This multilayered material contains the optimal combination of polymers that provide flexibility but also the ability to keep a desired shape. It protects well against contamination, damage, sticking, and drying as well being environmentally friendly. Galkin said about his innovation: "This intelligent material has an excellent memory."

This revolutionary material increased the competitiveness level of Ukrainian confectionery producers in the world market significantly. Galkin's invention in fact caused a further boom in the confectionery industry in Ukraine.

Galkin understood perfectly the importance of obtaining manufacturing competitiveness with foreign manufacturers in the industry, therefore, he directed all of the efforts of Ukrplastic to raising production standards. The significant investments in modern production technologies helped to maintain high standards.

"Technical, technological and banking innovations are the most important elements in the development of our economy. Namely, innovation allows us to be competitive and make a claim internationally," he said in 2003.

The volume of investment in the company tells us how much attention Galkin paid to the innovation in production and management. Since 2000, more than 100 million euros have been invested in the company.

Finally, there was created strong, innovational and industrial complex for the production of modern flexible packaging for the needs of the food, cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. The entire world now recognizes the Ukrainian packaging industry.

A major breakthrough in the company development took place in 2002. Ukrplastic organized presentation and display of its products at an exhibition in Düsseldorf - one of Galkin's friends said that it was a real blitzkrieg. The European market were offered samples of high quality and unique products, which grabbed the attention of multinational corporations such as Danone, Lactalis, Nestle, Mondelez (Kraft Foods), etc. Soon, they began to buy Ukrplastic materials for the packaging of their products.

In 2010, Galkin became a board member of the European Rotogravure Association (ERA). This gave a serious boost to the development of business and entry into the international markets. Ukrplastic's success in the new markets is borne out by the fact that over the next few years, the company received more than fifty prestigious industry awards. Today, international food industry leaders use Ukrainian packaging for their products, as do dozens of food processing companies.

Ecology and intellect

Galkin's innovative approaches powered the creation and development of a high-tech packaging industry in Ukraine. He knew perfectly well how important social responsibility is to a business. Galkin contributed to the health of the environment and of Ukrainian, as these were very important to him. In fact, he was the first to change the usual rules of the packaging industry. He was the first in Ukraine to decide not to use cheap and hazardous materials for packaging, such as PVC, which during its disposal releases toxic substances such as dioxins. In addition, he actively promoted work safety and environmental protection among all customers and partners.

"The civilized world expressed its negative attitude to PVC products long ago. In many countries, legislation prohibits or restricts the use of PVC materials in various fields, especially in the packaging sector. As for the Ukrainian people, who have lived with the effects of the Chernobyl disaster and have been living in unfavorable ecological conditions, it is totally unacceptable for there to be even the theoretical possibility of additional hazardous substances," Galkin said of Ukrplastic's giving up the production of packaging with chlorine-containing polymers.

Ukrplastic replaced them with new advanced materials and became the founder of an important environmental trend. Moreover, the company was the first in Ukraine to pass the certification requirements to gain the highest European quality and safety standards.

Galkin's significance for Ukraine, as an innovator and visionary, also was demonstrated in his support for young scientific talents. He supported on his own the intellectual growth of domestic researchers and developers - he paid out scholarships to the best students who were preparing to work in this industry, and he funded the publication of textbooks and scientific papers. These people will surely go on to contribute to the development of the Ukrainian economy, as Galkin did it.

After his death, I firmly decided not to stop this important activity of my husband. In 2014, I contributed to opening of the International Charitable Fund named after Oleksandr Galkin. Its goal is to support talented students, expand the innovational sector of the economy, and protect the ecological rights of Ukrainian citizens. Oleksandr Galkin's sense of initiative is continuing to bring benefits even right now.

At a new stage of development

Galkin headed Ukrplastic until May of 2013. After the tragic death of the scientist and businessman, his close family still continues his work. We built this unique business together, laying the foundations for the future development of the company, and currently its development is continuing as well as ever. Today, the company is increasingly expanding its markets and influence in Europe, it is one of the largest exporters in the country, and it has deservedly reached the level of an international holding.

Innovation leadership does not always imply popularity and a top status in technological progress. It usually happens the other way round: A pioneer always faces danger and risk, because no one is immune from failure. The first myth about innovators and risk is well known - namely the creator of wings, Daedalus, sacrificing his son Icarus while revealing to people a way to the heavens. Since then, things have changed, and our civilization has made a huge improvement in technological progress. However, there is always one person who takes the first step.

Ukraine needs people who are able to look beyond the horizon of dreams and bring greater plans to life. Perhaps people such as Oleksandr Galkin will be followed by a new generation of innovators - people who will be able to turn Ukraine into a modern and highly developed country.

25 myths and facts about Ukraine and Ukrainians

BY ANASTASIA YAROVA

Many foreigners, having told their friends they're moving to Kyiv for a job or posting, are asked: "Kyiv? That's in Russia, isn't it?"

As a recently independent country, it's not surprising that a number of myths or misconceptions about Ukraine still persist. Long under the yoke of its giant neighbor Russia, Ukrainians have struggled through the centuries to maintain their distinct identity, traditions and culture.

Ukrainians have largely succeeded in doing so, but there are still a few misapprehensions about the country that have yet to be put to rest, and due to mendacious Kremlin propaganda, a few more have emerged in recent years. Here, the Kyiv Post sets the record straight about a range of myths that have grown up about the country.

Ukrainians eat a lot

Anyone who has attended a Ukrainian birthday party or other family celebration will have encountered a table groaning with huge amounts of food, and one might get the impression Ukrainians always overindulge at mealtimes. In fact, the Ukrainian diet is rather healthy and modest, which is borne out by the country's obesity rate: At around 20 percent, it is not even in the top 30 in the world, and is far below most Western countries' rates, and Russia's as well.

Ukrainians marry young

While this may have been true in the past, when getting married was often a way to jump the line for the provision of state housing, it is no longer. Today, Ukrainians tend not to get married until after the age of 26, as women are becoming more career-focused and both men and women are reluctant to start a family unless they can really afford everything they need. Liudmyla Sliusar, a researcher at the Ukrainian Institute for Demography and Social Studies, says the average age men get married is 30, while for women it is 27, according to a report in Gazeta.UA.



Dozens of Ukrainians dressed in traditional attire and each donning a unique "vyshyvanka" - a traditional embroidered shirt - paraded through Kyiv on Independence Day on Aug. 24, 2013. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

Ukrainian men want women as homemakers

Another hangover from the days of the Soviet Union, this is largely no longer the case, especially in younger people who have only lived in independent Ukraine. With the widespread availability of higher education for women, and increasing career opportunities, fewer Ukrainian women are content to assume traditional roles, and the majority of women in Ukraine, after university, now pursue careers and by the age of 26-28 are yet not married and do not have children.

Ukraine is cold and snowy much of the year

Ukraine has a continental climate, with winters that are colder than in Western Europe but summers that are usually hotter. The capital Kyiv is practically on the same latitude as London in the United Kingdom, and the southern portions of the country have a climate well-suited to growing grapes, while Crimea's climate is sub-tropical. The weather is changeable and heavy thunderstorms are common in the summer months, but the climate is far more temperate than in Siberia or most of Canada.

Ukrainian education is corrupt, low quality

Not even close. Ukraine ranks fourth highest in percentage of citizens with a higher education, and in the top 40 smartest countries based on math and science scores, according to Business Insider. While it is still common to have to make payments to educational institutions to gain admission, and there are isolated cases of people having paid to be awarded degrees, the quality of Ukrainian education is high. Moreover, recent private initiatives to teach information technology skills to the workforce should ensure Ukraine has some of the best-skilled tech workers in the world for years to come.

The Ukrainian language is a dialect of Russian

Within the Slavic language group,

Russian is in fact the odd one out. If you could have heard an ancient East Slavic tribesman, his speech would have sounded much more like Ukrainian than Russian. Indeed, Ukrainian shares many more linguistic features with Belarusian, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Serbo-Croat than it does with Russian. Ukrainian and Russian are not mutually intelligible - the standard linguistic test for determining whether a language is a fully-fledged language in its own right, and not a dialect of another. While many people in Ukraine have Russian as their first language, most people are bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian, and will switch languages depending on who they are speaking to. Politics aside, the language issue has never been problematic in Ukraine.

Patriotic Ukrainians are extreme nationalists

This new myth has emerged since Russia's invasion and annexation of Crimea and its war in the Donbas. Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian nationalist who lived from 1909 to 1959, who fought with and against both the Soviets and the German Nazis during World War II, is a controversial figure in Ukraine, and by no means the sole figurehead of the Ukrainian independence movement. Ukrainian politics has become more overtly patriotic and nationalistic since the Kremlin launched its war, but election results show that most Ukrainians are social democrats,

favoring left-of-center politics.

Ukraine has little in common with West

The perception of Ukraine as an exotic, Eastern country has its roots in old stereotypes about the Soviet Union that persist to this day. But geographically, the center of Europe lies within Ukraine's borders, and there is much about Ukrainian culture and traditions that immediately strike Westerners as familiar. In western Ukraine, in particular, there are areas that have been incorporated in other European states, such as the Austro-Hungarian empire, and which bear the hallmark of this Central European influence to this day.

Ukrainians drink a lot

While the availability of cheap alcohol does cause problems with alcoholism in Ukraine, according to the World Health Organization the level of alcohol consumption in Ukraine is the same as in Italy, at 22nd place in the world. Drinking habits are different here than in France, for instance, where having a glass or two of beer or wine during dinner every day is the norm: Ukrainians tend not to drink at every meal. Social drinking is much more ritualized, however, with the tradition of liberally toasting friends, family and guests with Ukrainian vodka on special



Face-painted patriots march from Shevchenko Park to European Square on Nov. 24, 2013. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

Ukraine must grow – as a brand and destination – to become a hub for doing business in Eastern Europe



Ukrainian investor and developer Ruslan Oleksenko at Senator Apartments Maidan, one of the apartment hotels his company has developed and operates

BY MARIA SHEVCHENKO

Ruslan Oleksenko, founder of DEOL Partners, shares his ideas about doing business in Ukraine and the country's future prospects. As a developer and investor with an extensive experience on the real estate market, he strongly believes in the power of ideas and initiatives that can lead to very positive results for investors as well as benefit the local community.

In this the 25th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence this year, how would you describe doing business in Ukrainian real estate?

For doing business in Ukraine an entrepreneur should definitely be prepared for everything and anything – attention to multiple scenarios and the ability to react appropriately to them are keys to success. As the American phrase says: "There's no such thing as a free lunch." The profitability of an investment is nearly always in direct proportion to the level of risk an investor is willing to take. In Ukraine you can expect a higher return on investments, but you should always be flexible and apply the principles of change-management on a regular basis. If you plan to start your business in Ukrainian real estate, I highly recommend you to look for an experienced partner to guide you through the many potential pitfalls.

Our company's partners have been operating in Ukraine since 1992 and have built up extensive experience in investment as well as the real estate market. We understand the languages, traditions and customs of our part of the world and, thinking like entrepreneurs and developers, also realize the importance of making timely, well-informed decisions.

In turbulent times of the economy, investors tend to stay low and are very sensitive to all changes in the market. How do you build a relationship with investors?

As a real estate developer and investor, myself, I understand their expectations and desired outcome from participating in a project. In these uncertain times, the most important factors are a sense of leadership and stability. The level of trust in a developer is a very sensitive matter and is built on personal reputation, that of the company and its team's proven ability to achieve the results with a high level of professionalism in any matter. Maintaining close cooperation throughout the project is crucial.

You should first show examples of successful existing projects that your company has developed and launched already, any awards it has earned. For example, DEOL Partners has been awarded as Developer of the year 2013 according to Ukrainian Hospitality Awards and also has gained numerous recognitions for company's projects in development of office, retail,

hotel and other properties. This will give confidence to the potential investor; then you add the project's financial model to give a clear idea of the projected return on the specific investment. DEOL's flexible strategy of doing business has secured excellent returns even in the low seasons of the market and in our more seasonal sectors, such as hospitality.

Can you give us some examples of the projects that your company has been involved with?

Our company's portfolio includes successful projects that are known for its prominent brands – 11 Mirrors Design Hotel, the luxury boutique property in Kyiv and the first Design Hotel in the CIS-countries; Senator Apartments, the award-winning chain of apartment hotels in Ukraine, operating since 2005; Kiev Airport City, mixed-use multifunctional complex immediately adjacent Boryspil International Airport; Leonardo Business Centre, the first "A" class business center in Ukraine and Senator Lifestyle Club, situated on the Dniepro River and offering a range of sporting and recreational activities in a Western style club format. Distinguished by innovative thinking, the team at DEOL Partners exceeds market expectations while delivering the dream behind each building.

the hospitality sector is full of new opportunities, which is of particular interest to DEOL Partners in our role as hotel developers. For instance, "Bleisure" trend presents a mix of business and leisure activities for a person while travelling. This feature opens numerous chances for developers to re-arrange the hotel's concept and present the new idea of stay. Such trends and changes as healthy lifestyle for business travelers, growing demographic with Millennials in the target audience mix should be carefully analyzed and considered. I can't disclose any details yet, but we have already prepared a serious expansion plan that involves new concepts and brands for development abroad, as well as here in Ukraine.

And what are your personal factors for success?

Never to settle for just good results, but to aim for the best possible options, and to be constantly on the look-out for new opportunities and niche markets. My personal passion for excellence has evolved into DEOL Partners' mission that states: to be the most innovative and competitive commercial organization on the East European real estate market.

Success is always a tricky thing unless you are surrounded by people you trust and believe in and who are ready to support your ideas, vision and



11 Mirrors hotel is the first and the only member of Design Hotels™ in Ukraine

Most of your projects concentrate in Kyiv. Why does your company select Ukraine's capital as a center of doing business?

Kyiv is the place where national business is concentrated and where international investors and companies initiate their business. With a population of over three million, the city is a place where people want to live or come for short or long visits. These needs should be supported by real estate including business centers, shopping centers, residential developments and hotels, and so DEOL Partners' investment and development activities are indeed concentrated in our capital city.

However, we are constantly on the lookout for new opportunities. Our team is open to new projects and cooperation with property owners who want to build successful businesses in commercial real estate elsewhere in Ukraine.

Your company has recently delivered a series of successful projects in hospitality, so can you give us your perspective view on hospitality?

The world is changing. The behaviour and priorities of travellers' are quite different now and

initiatives. I am very proud of the DEOL Partners' team, built-up over the years and able to achieve the results and recognition investors are seeking.

What do you think should be done for Ukraine as a country to strengthen its position in the global market as a place for doing business?

Ukraine must grow – as a brand and destination – to become a hub for doing business in Eastern Europe and as a gateway to the Caucasus and Central Asia. We live in a world with a cyclical economy, where good years change to bad times, so, to ensure continued growth even during difficult times, good companies must adopt innovative outside-the-box thinking and maintain a flexible approach. I firmly believe that Ukraine has every chance of becoming a dynamic recipient of significant overseas capital and investment.



11 Mirrors is #1 on TripAdvisor in Kyiv and Ukraine since 2013

Myths and facts about Ukraine

Myths from page 8

occasions leading to the impression that overconsumption of alcohol is common. In reality, it is not.

Much of Ukraine has been contaminated by Chernobyl radioactivity

The dreadful Chernobyl disaster of April 26, 1986 has left a long shadow on the country, and rendered the area around the stricken plant uninhabitable for perhaps centuries. However, the vast majority of the country was unaffected by the radioactive fallout from the reactor explosion, and Ukrainian food and water are regularly checked for radioactivity. While Ukrainians remember the disaster with grief, radioactivity in the country barely registers among their everyday concerns.

Unemotional Ukrainians

This myth has appeared because it is not the Ukrainian habit to be open and smiling with strangers – but they are no more “cold and unemotional” than any northern European would be. Once you get to know them better, Ukrainians express their feeling and emotions much more openly, and can then strike their guests as being more straightforward and sincere than some Westerners.

Crimea is a Russian land

While Russia absorbed Crimea into its empire in the 18th century after one of its many wars with the Ottoman Empire (based in Turkey), Crimea has a long history that had little to do with Russia, or even Ukraine. The people with the greatest claim to call Crimea home, are, of course, the Crimean Tatars, but their population was repressed and deported during the time that the Russian Empire and later Soviet Union was in control of the peninsula. Things changed for the better after Ukraine gained independence, and Crimea gained autonomy within the unitary state of Ukraine, with Crimean Tatars returning to their homeland from places of deportation in Central Asia. Ethnic Russians and Ukrainians also inhabit Crimea, but describing it as “Russian land” is to ignore a vast portion of its history, recent and ancient.

Easy women in Ukraine

Even in Soviet times, Ukrainian women (especially in the capital Kyiv), were famed for their beauty. This reputation carried over into the years of independence, and Kyiv was a favorite destination for rich Western men looking for a



People wearing vyshyvankas, traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirts, take part in a Vyshyvanka March marking the Independence Day of Ukraine in Kyiv on Aug. 24, 2014. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

“mail-order bride.” Many have been disappointed: not by the beauty of Ukrainian women, but by the fact that Ukrainian women are apt to demand respect from men, and their favors cannot simply be bought by a man offering a new home in a far-off Western country. While Ukrainian women can be loving and faithful wives, and caring mothers, winning their affection is not easy, and will demand sincere effort from any man.

Ukrainians eat a lot of salo (lard, or pig fat)

It is true that the majority of Ukrainians like salo and eat it quite often. However, the average Ukrainian eats no more than 18 kilograms of pork a year, which is a third of the amount eaten by the average German. Still, Ukrainians' fondness for pork fat is evident in its trade statistics - Ukraine annually imports up to 70,000 tons of lard from Germany, Hungary and Poland. So this myth is pretty close to reality.

Service is bad

Another hangover from Soviet times is the perception among foreigners that the service in Ukrainian hotels, bars and restaurants is universally bad. In fact, Ukrainian service, especially in the larger cities, has improved immensely over the past two decades or so. That's mainly been due to the competition for jobs in the service industries that

emerged due to job shortages in the nascent market economy – now, those who want to get a job in a top bar or restaurant have to have good service skills. And while it's not usual to tip in Ukraine, if you do leave something for your server, you will be practically guaranteed a warm welcome and attentive service next time you visit.

Ukrainians wear vyshyvankas a lot

This has started to become less of a myth since the EuroMaidan Revolution, but is still far from being entirely true. The vyshyvanka is an essential part of Ukraine's national costume, and it is true that after the revolution it became a symbol, and a way to express national identity and pride. Moreover, the vyshyvanka is now a very popular fashion item in Ukraine and beyond. World famous brands, from Valentino to H&M, now use elements of Ukrainian embroidery in their clothes. And while Ukrainians used to wear vyshyvankas mostly on big occasions, and no more than once or twice a year, many are now proud to wear embroidered shirts or dresses as everyday wear.

Ukrainians rip off unsuspecting tourists

It used to be quite common to see signs at the entry to tourist sights in Ukraine with separate prices for Ukrainians and foreigners – the prices for foreigners being higher. But that is hardly ever the case now. If a bar or restaurant favored by foreigners has high prices, Ukrainians have to pay them as well, and indeed, relatively speaking, such places are more expensive for most Ukrainians to visit, so tourists often actually get quite a good deal, especially in comparison to prices in other countries. Despite the war in the east, Ukraine is still a great destination for tourists, with more than 10 million people visiting in 2014, most of them, however, from bordering countries.

Ukrainians want to leave their country

This “myth” is actually more true than not. An estimated 3 million

Ukrainians work abroad, mostly in Russia, Poland and other Eastern European countries. Large numbers of Ukrainians have left the country since independence for work or study, and many have since chosen to live abroad permanently. However, in this country of over 40 million people most have chosen to remain here, even when they have had the opportunity to leave. Indeed, since Ukraine's EuroMaidan Revolution, many Ukrainians who built successful careers abroad have returned to their homeland to help it build a better future.

Ukrainian women are among most beautiful

This is no myth, and the research proves it: Ukraine has consistently been ranked among the top 10 countries in the world in terms of the beauty of its women. Ukrainian women are also proud of their femininity and dress accordingly: sweatpants and hoodies would generally be last out of the closet when they are deciding what to wear.

Ukraine has the worst roads in the world

Given Ukraine's climate of hot summers and cold winters, road surfaces tend to deteriorate quickly. Add to that budget shortages for road repairs, and it's no surprise many roads, even in big cities, are in a poor state in Ukraine – hence the popularity of SUVs and cars with a high clearance. But the worst roads in the world? Nowhere near it. Ukraine has also been upgrading its highway network in recent years, and now the roads between Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv are some of the best in the country, matching those in Western Europe, at least in terms of surface quality.

Ukrainians drink vodka

Well, yes they do, but it's more likely that they will actually be drinking horilka – Ukrainian vodka. Vodka is a Russian word, roughly meaning “little water,” while the Ukrainian word horilka translates roughly as “burning water.” Firewater, basically. Moreover,

a favorite traditional flavoring for horilka is chili pepper, so some horilka can indeed “burn” the throat.

Ukraine suffered a coup by neo-Nazis in 2013-14

This myth of Kremlin propaganda was created as the anti-government protests in Kyiv reached their climax in the early months of 2014. While it's true that a small number of protesters were from the far right, the vast majority were ordinary Ukrainians. The Orwellian use of the word “coup” to describe the popular uprising is another clue to this myth's origins as Kremlin propaganda. Repeat this nonsense to Ukrainians at your peril – most will be insulted, and those who participated in the protests themselves in Kyiv will be insulted, but also laugh at you for being so gullible.

Ukraine isn't a country

During the NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania, Russian President Vladimir Putin said to then U.S. President George W. Bush: “You have to understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a country.” While this opinion fits nicely with the Kremlin's view of the world, the facts shows it to be a myth. Ukraine within its present borders, including the Russian-annexed territory of Crimea, is an internationally recognized state, and a member of the United Nations. Indeed, Ukraine joined the United Nations as an individual nation state in 1945, while Russia did not – it was represented as part of the Soviet Union.

Kyiv is the mother of Russian cities

Kyiv was the capital of the ancient Kyivan Rus state, which broke up in the 12th century, long before any state known as “Russia” came to exist. The modern Russian state more directly precedes from Tsarist Russia, which itself proceeded from the Grand Duchy of Moscow, or Muscovy, with its capital in Moscow. Thus the “mother city” of modern Russia is, in fact, Moscow.

Ukraine is 'deeply divided along ethnic and linguistic lines'

Since gaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has mostly been a peaceful, ethnically and linguistically varied state, home to speakers of not only Ukrainian, but Russian, Eastern Yiddish, Rusyn, Romanian, Belarusian, Crimean Tatar, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish, Armenian, German and Greek. While Ukrainian is the language most commonly spoken, Russian is also widely used, and many Ukrainians are equally proficient in both. Moreover, Ukrainians will switch between the two as the situation requires, sometimes using different languages to address the members of a single conversational group. Politics had muddied the issue, but ethnic Ukrainians can be heard speaking Russian as well as Ukrainian. It is a mistake to identify a Russian-speaking Ukrainian as a “Russian,” just as it would be a mistake to say an American, Canadian, Australian, Irish person or Scot was “English” because they speak English. ■



Ukrainians eat a lot of salo (raw pork fat), but less pork meat per capita than some other countries. (1zoom.ru)

Ukraine's determined will is inspiration for rest of world



GEORGE WEIGEL

During the EuroMaidan Revolution, if I remember correctly, one of the brave souls who stood fast in support of the promises of Ukraine's independence said, "We came to the Maidan looking for Europe, and we found Ukraine." By which I think he meant that Ukrainians found in each other the solidarity that had been previously missing in their country. And from that solidarity, this man seemed to believe, a new Ukraine – a prosperous and democratic Ukraine, governed by the rule of law and taking its rightful place in the West – would be born.

I hoped he was right, then. And I still hope he was right. Because the general fecklessness of the West in the face of Russian aggression and Russian murder in Ukraine means that Ukrainians are going to have to "find Ukraine" without very much material assistance from those to

whom they have a right to look for support – their neighbors in the democratic West.

This is, frankly, disgraceful, but the shame does not lie in Ukraine. It lies in Washington and London and Paris and Berlin and Rome, and everywhere else where Western political leaders have sought to appease Russian President Vladimir Putin's appetite for empire by acquiescing in the invasion and annexation of Crimea and the ongoing Russian war in the Donbas. But the sad fact of the matter, on this silver jubilee of Ukraine's independence, is that "the West" seems to have lost the will to push back, hard, against aggression in its neighborhood. So "finding Ukraine" will continue to be primarily a task for Ukrainians, with help from individuals and democratically-minded nongovernmental organizations in the West.

The paradox here is that, should Ukraine win through – should the process of Ukrainian national self-renewal succeed, economically and politically – Ukraine just might give the flaccid West a much needed jolt of moral and cultural inspiration. For Ukraine's next 25 years will

bring success only if the solidarity demonstrated on the Maidan holds firm and indeed grows, such that Ukraine shows the entire democratic world a path beyond the debilitating individualism and politically correct tribalism that are eroding the moral foundations of democracy throughout the North Atlantic world.

The "Europe" to which Ukraine aspired is now in crisis because of a solidarity deficit. In its current, wretched presidential campaign, the United States is embarrassing itself before the world because of a solidarity deficit. Yet in the face of these defaults in the West, men and women of character and conviction are working steadily to give the solidarity they experienced on the Maidan real effect in Ukraine's economic, legal, and political life. Should they succeed, Ukraine will have taught the entire West a lesson it badly needs to re-learn: that democracy without solidarity – that profound sense of moral obligation to others who are not just "others" but who are also "neighbors" and fellow-protagonists in the drama of self-government – is impossible.

Solidarity can grow from social

and cultural soil nurtured by different nutrients. Solidarity can grow from a commitment to the moral truths built into the world and into us, truths that we can know by reason. Solidarity can grow from religious conviction – and has notably done so in Ukraine, through the work of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and those Orthodox communities that have disentangled themselves from the Moscow Patriarchate's entanglement with Russian state power. Solidarity can be nurtured by both reason and revelation: that is the lesson of Ukraine, especially in recent years; that is the truth that Ukraine needs to live more fully in the next quarter-century of its hard-won independence; and that is the lesson that Ukraine can teach the West.

Meanwhile, it is incumbent upon those of us in the West who share Ukrainian's noblest aspirations to do whatever we can to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. We can and must bring whatever pressure we can to bear on our governments to resist Putin's aggression, to counter Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's lies,

to fight Russian propaganda in the communications media and cyberspace, and to provide the Ukrainian armed forces with the materiel they need to defend Ukraine from Russian aggression. In the coming years, we should work to create ever-broader networks of exchange between Ukrainian democratic reformers and their counterparts in the West. And we in the West can work to convince our friends and neighbors that Ukraine's cause is our cause, the entire West's cause – and that participating in that great cause can revivify our own democratic commitments.

As the shadows of totalitarianism lengthened across Europe in the 1930s, Pope Pius XI said, "Let us thank God that He makes us live amidst the present problems; it is no longer permitted to anyone to be mediocre." Ukraine's determination to live "beyond mediocrity" is an inspiration, and ought to stir the conscience of the West.

George Weigel is a distinguished senior fellow of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center, where he holds the William E. Simon Chair in Catholic Studies. ■

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25 trailblazing business leaders in Ukraine

BY DENYS KRASNIKOV
AND JOSH KOVENSKY
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In Ukraine's 25 years of independence, the country's business scene has veered from communism to gangster capitalism to entrepreneurial innovation.

Over the years, an array of businesspeople from Ukraine and abroad have managed to build great companies, even in Ukraine's challenging business environment dominated by oligarchs.

The success stories include expats from Western Europe, the United States and even other parts of the former Soviet Union, such as Lithuania-born Aivaras Abromavicius coming to Donetsk to work in a Swedish investment fund, and others, like American Jed Sunden, coming to Ukraine and founding the Kyiv Post and a multimillion-dollar media empire that he sold.

The Kyiv Post has drawn up a list of 25 top businesspeople who are running, or who have successfully run a business in Ukraine.

The newspaper excluded the nation's richest people from this list, preferring to emphasize people who created new wealth and ideas rather than those – like many top oligarchs – who made their fortunes simply by acquiring Soviet assets in non-competitive and non-transparent – some would simply say rigged – privatizations.

The list also attempts to reward those who have shown commitment to a high degree of business ethics and community involvement.

That said, the Kyiv Post recognizes such lists are subjective and that many other worthy people could easily be included in the top 25 businesspeople. Nevertheless, here's who we highlight:

20 outstanding persons



Jean-Jacques Herve

Jean-Jacques Herve, a French-born agronomist who has been working in the region since 1974, has served in a variety of roles in Ukraine, the first being an advisor on agriculture to the Ukrainian government. He serves on the board of Credit Agricole, Ukraine and also teaches at the Kyiv School of Economics.



Denis Dovgopoliy

Denis Dovgopoliy founded GrowthUp Group, which trains and invests in Ukrainian tech startups. He helped develop such well-known companies as Viewdle, sold to Google for at least \$35 million, and a Ukrainian ridesharing company



Aivaras Abromavicius and Natalie Jaresko brought their considerable business experience in Ukraine to top government posts. Abromavicius served as economy minister and Jaresko as finance minister. (UNIAN)

that merged with French BlaBlaCar. GrowthUp also organizes IT conferences such as Silicon Valley Open Doors in the United States and Dublin, and Ukraine's biggest IT conference, iForum.



Natalie Jaresko

Being both a successful businesswoman and formidable political figure, Jaresko has contributed a lot to the development of Ukraine's economy. In 1992, she became the first Chief of the Economic Section of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine, responsible for strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries. Having served as Ukraine's Finance Minister later from 2014 until 2016, Jaresko still remains a prominent business figure, running private equity fund Horizon Capital, which she founded back in 2006.



Steve Fisher

Steve Fisher has been Ukraine country director for Citibank since 2010. He was elected to the position of chairman of the board of directors of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine in January 2016.



Nick Piazza

Currently at the helm of investment banking services firm SP Advisors, Nick Piazza has been working in Ukraine regularly since 2006, when he joined Concorde Capital. Before joining SP, Piazza was CEO of BG Advisors, another investment company.



Aivaras Abromavicius

Before agreeing to head the Ministry of Economic Development in the wake of the 2014 EuroMaidan Revolution, Aivaras

Abromavicius worked for Swedish-owned investment fund East Capital. Starting there in 2002, Abromavicius split his time between working on projects in Donetsk and Kyiv.



Taras Kytsmey

Taras Kytsmey co-founded SoftServe, a Ukrainian software company that has main offices in Austin, Texas and Lviv. Founded in 1993, SoftServe has become the largest IT outsourcing firm in Ukraine.



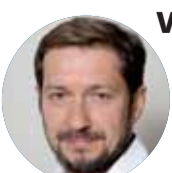
Jed Sunden

Without Jed Sunden, this list might not exist. Sunden founded the Kyiv Post in 1995, and made it the heart of a small publishing empire before selling the newspaper to Mohammad Zahoor on July 28, 2009. Sunden also owned the news magazine Korrespondent through his company, KP Media, before selling the title to Ukraine Media Holding in 2011.



Dmitry Krepak

Dmitry Krepak worked as the chairman of Polish-backed Ukrainian lender Kredobank from 2012 until December 2015, when he moved to the position of regional manager for Visa in Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia. Kredobank has weathered the country's banking crisis quite well, remaining stable, legally compliant, and has snapped up market share given up by collapsed banks.



Vitaliy Boyko

A longtime player on the Kyiv real estate market and former partner at mall developer UTG, Vitaliy Boyko now heads

Top Five



Tomas Fiala

With \$100 million to his name, Dragon Capital CEO Tomas Fiala has done well since his arrival in Ukraine in 1995. Fiala, a Czech national who first set up an office in Ukraine for a brokerage, has wound up staying here since, weathering everything from the 1998 financial collapse to the country's current economic troubles. Along the way, Fiala has developed Dragon Capital, which he founded in 2000, into a Western-style investor, even negotiating the 2007 sale of a minority stake in the firm to Goldman Sachs, the U.S. investment firm. Fiala also chaired the European Business Association from 2010 to 2015.



Lenna Koszarny

Horizon Capital co-founder and CEO Lenna Koszarny has led the Western-funded investment firm since December 2014, when Natalie Jaresko left to become the nation's finance minister. Koszarny manages \$600 million in assets across three funds within Horizon, focused on encouraging growth in Ukraine and regionally. Koszarny is a board member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine as well as the Ukrainian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association.



Vladyslav Chechetkin

Vladyslav Chechetkin, 37, launched Rozetka 10 years ago. It is now Ukraine's biggest online retailer, accounting for a whopping 40 percent of the country's e-commerce industry. It is the standard bearer for the entire Ukrainian retail market. At first Rozetka sold mostly consumer electronics. But, step-by-step, the list of goods it sells has been augmented with toys, clothes, sports goods, beauty care products, musical instruments and even pets supplies. The website has 145,000 items available for purchase and boast more than 1.5 million visits every day. Chechetkin's net worth is estimated to be \$64 million.



Andrey Kolodyuk

Andrey Kolodyuk, 45, has been active in building the entrepreneurial community in Ukraine since the 1990s, and has founded and developed around a dozen companies in the information technology, telecoms, internet and media sectors, which have brought in \$1 billion in revenues. From 2001 to 2005, Kolodyuk was the chair of the Telecoms Committee of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine. He was elected as a Young Global Leader (from Ukraine) of the World Economic Forum in 2008. In 2001, he founded AVentures, and in 2012 with his partner Yevgen Sysoyev launched a new fund – AVentures Capital, focused on early stage IT and web-related projects, with a focus on global market. Since then, Kolodyuk has not just become a famous investor and mentor for many of Ukraine's young companies, he has committed himself to creating a successful Ukrainian startup and VC ecosystem. In August 2014, Kolodyuk founded the Ukrainian Venture Capital and Private Equity Association, which promotes investment opportunities in Ukraine. He is also a board member of Ciklum, a global software engineering and technology company. His AVentures fund has invested more than \$10 million in Ukrainian startups over the last four years.



Jaroslav Kinach

A European Bank and Reconstruction Development country director for Ukraine from 1995 to 1999, Jaroslav Kinach has focused his business efforts since on the energy industry, attempting to bring Western standards to local resource extraction. Kinach serves on the boards of Black Iron Inc, DeNovo and Emerstone, an investment fund that is poised to win a tender to develop the country's largest oil field. After working for the EBRD, he was an advisor to the prime minister of Ukraine, providing policy advice on attracting foreign investment. Between 2003 and 2008, he served as an independent director on the boards of Swedbank Ukraine and Chagala Group Limited, an LSE listed real estate company based in Kazakhstan, and was non-executive chairman of Fabian Romania Limited, an AIM listed company operating in Romania. Kinach holds an MBA from Columbia University, New York; a BA from Concordia University, Montreal; and is a Fellow of the Institute of Canadian Bankers.

Urban Experts, a land development and consulting firm that maintains assets around the region. After the EuroMaidan Revolution, Boyko spent a year in Kyiv city government as a deputy at the Kyiv Investment Agency.



Torben Majgaard

Torben Majgaard has been an expat in Ukraine for almost 20 years. Ciklum, the company that the Danish citizen founded in 2002, has seen astounding revenue growth in the past several years. Majgaard's success has vaulted Ciklum into the ranks of other major IT outsourcing companies in the nation and worldwide. Ciklum employs up to 2,500 people in Ukraine.



Evgeni Utkin

Evgeni Utkin is the founder and president of KM Core, an innovative hi-tech holding company, with a portfolio of assets in IT, microelectronics and nanotechnologies. Utkin is a hi-tech pioneer and a prominent figure in the knowledge exchange process between the West and both Russia and Ukraine.



Vyacheslav Klimov

Vyacheslav Klimov co-founded Nova Poshta, one of the fastest-growing companies in Ukraine. Its annual turnover is about Hr 2 billion (\$80 million). Klimov is also the president of the Association of



Horizon Capital CEO Lenna Koszarny is with Dmytro Kostyk, owner of Kodisoft, near the Presidential Administration in Kyiv before a meeting between the country's information technology leaders and President Petro Poroshenko on July 6 in Kyiv. (Lenna Koszarny/facebook)

Ukrainian Entrepreneurs.



Valery Krasovsky

Valery Krasovsky is co-founder and CEO of Sigma Software, a Ukrainian-Swedish IT company, which currently employs more than 500 people in Ukraine and partners with giants

like SAP, Microsoft and IBM. Sigma Software is considered a rising star, and is among best 100 outsourcers in the world, according to The 2016 Global Outsourcing 100.



Vadim Rogovskiy

Vadim Rogovskiy founded social app monetization ad net-

work Clickburner in 2010. In 2013 it transformed into the mobile marketing platform Clickky, which by rose to 11th in the prestigious list of the 5,000 fastest-growing companies in Europe, called The 2016 Inc. 5000. He is also a cofounder of one of the biggest startup incubators in Eastern Europe, WannaBiz. In 2015, Forbes Ukraine put Rogovskiy on its list of 30 most successful Ukrainians under the age of 30.



Andriy Pivovarsky

Much of Andriy Pivovarsky's work as infrastructure minister was focused on opening up access for Ukraine to key global markets. Before taking the top job at the ministry, Pivovarsky was the managing director of the investment banking department at one of Ukraine's leading groups of companies working in the field of investment and financial services, Dragon Capital. He is also the CEO of Continium Fuel Industrial Group, which owns a successful national chain of gasoline stations and convenience stores in Ukraine.



Ihor Lytovchenko

The founder and permanent head of Kyivstar company since 1994, Ihor Lytovchenko spearheaded the development of one of the most successful businesses in Ukraine. Under his leadership, Kyiv's local cellphone provider took the top position on the national telecoms market, providing services to about 25 million subscribers all over Ukraine.



Oleksii Vitchenko

The founder of a venture fund targeting startups Digital Future, a member of the Ukrainian Business Angels Network, and an investor and board member of dozens Ukrainian tech startups, Oleksii Vitchenko has built a career as a successful businessman in Ukraine and abroad.



Carl Sturen

Sweden's Sturen has been an investor in Ukraine since 1994. In 1996, he cofounded the largest tomato processing company in Central and Eastern Europe - Kherson-based Chumak. A fan of green energy, he also cofounded the Ukraine-based wind power development and investment company Vindkraft Ukraina. In 2010, Sturen cofounded yet another company in Ukraine, Green Team, which soon became the biggest vegetable cold storage and packaging company in Eastern Europe.



Alex Bornyakov

With over a decade of experience in IT management, Alex Bornyakov has founded and managed a number of successful companies and startup incubators, including U.S. video monetization platform VertaMedia, now valued at up to \$50 million, and outsourcing company Intersog. He is also a managing partner at business incubator WannaBiz and a lawmaker for the Samopomich Party. ■

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PARTICIPANTS:

25 top Ukrainian exports

BY JOSH KOVENSKY
KOVENSKY@KYIVPOST.COM

While economic woes get the most attention, it's worth remembering that Ukraine is still a nation that exports many products to the world. It is, in fact, one of the leading exporters in several areas: jet engines, rockets and satellites are all produced in, and exported from, Ukrainian plants, while the country's vast agricultural sector provides huge amounts of food to Europe and the Middle East.

Below are the country's top 25 exports, according to Ukrstat and the State Fiscal Service's tally of export revenues for 2015.

Sunflower products

One of Ukraine's national symbols, the sunflower produces both cooking oil and sunflower seeds and brings in \$3 billion in export revenue to the country.

Corn

According to the U.S Department of Agriculture, corn crops are grown on roughly 60 percent of Ukraine's arable land, and earn Ukraine an estimated \$3 billion in export revenues.

IT Services

The information technology services industry is among the fastest growing areas of Ukraine's economy, with entrepreneurs taking advantage of the large number of the country's workers who are highly educated in technical fields. Last year saw Ukraine make a whopping \$2.5 billion from providing IT services abroad.

Wheat

Ukraine made around \$2.2 billion from its wheat exports last year. What was once the Soviet Union's breadbasket now serves the same purpose for Europe and the Middle East, Ukraine's vast fields of grain have given the country a relatively stable economic base on which to build over the turbulent years of



A sunflower field in Kherson Oblast. Sunflower products bring in Ukraine's largest share of export revenues. (UNIAN)

independence.

Iron ore

Iron ore is one of Ukraine's most abundant natural resources, and is an input for the massive furnaces and industries in the country's center and east. But not all of it is smelted within Ukraine - \$2 billion worth of iron ore was exported last year.

Timber

Timber from logging, legal and illegal, is one of Ukraine's main exports. That could, however, be in question now that the European Union has mandated that Ukraine implement a ban on log exports that parliament

approved in November 2015. The country made \$1.1 billion from such exports last year.

Jumper cables

Ukraine inherited parts of the Soviet Union's distributed car manufacturing industry, a remnant of Soviet central economic planning. Ukraine earned \$827.7 million from jumper cable exports in 2015.

Soy

Ukraine is one of the world's largest soybean producers, with 4.2 million tons of soybeans anticipated from this year's harvest. The country made \$800 million from exporting

this crop in 2015.

Jet engines

Ukraine's aviation enterprises have remained resilient and profitable throughout the past 25 years, with both Antonov and Motor Sich remaining competitive at least regionally. The country made \$614.9 million in revenues from jet engine exports last year.

Meat

Ukraine's abundant plains and grain reserves make it an ideal place for raising livestock. While Ukraine has strong domestic demand for meat and meat products, the country last

year also made \$377.6 million from meat exports.

Dairy

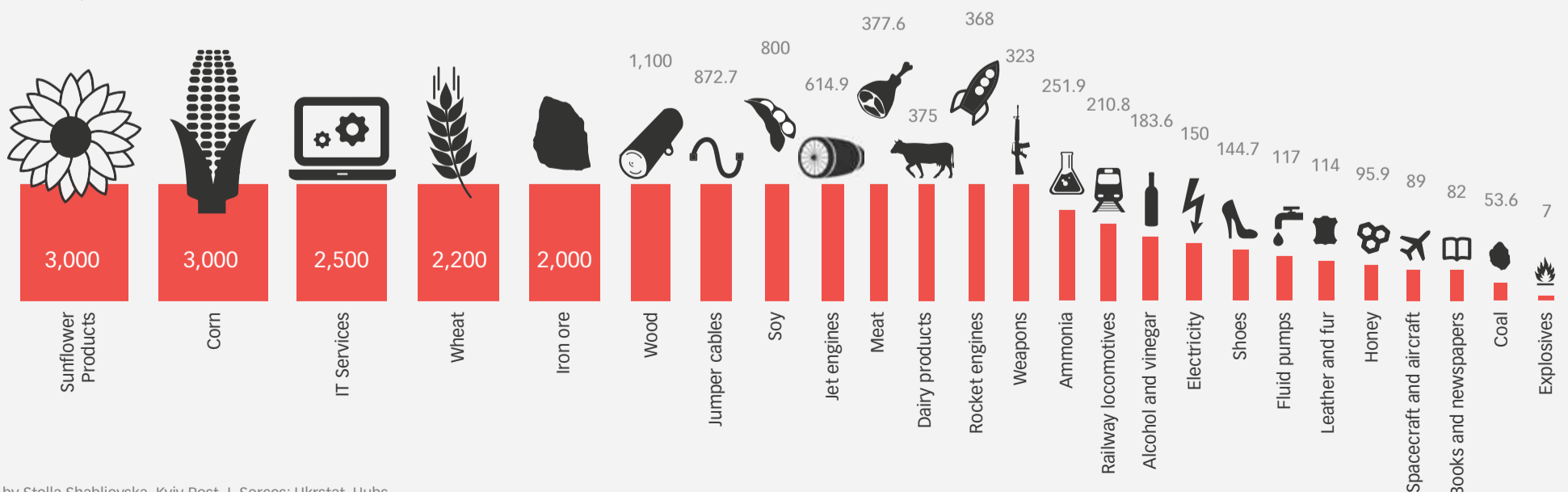
Ukraine milks its livestock for all it is worth, and earned \$375 million in revenues from dairy exports last year.

Rocket engines

The legacy of Soviet military-industrial infrastructure left Ukraine with design and production facilities for rocket engines. The Yuzhnoe design bureau in Dnipro makes the Zenit family of rockets, as does the Yuzhmash production plant, also in Dnipro. The rockets used to be sold

UKRAINE'S TOP 25 EXPORTS

in 2015, in \$ millions



Ukraine's agricultural sector retains a leading place in the export of a variety of foods to Europe and the Middle East.

Moreover a wide range of technical products continue to be produced by Ukrainian factories. Nevertheless, IT services, an industry of brain power, takes a top position in the list of Ukraine's exports.

mainly to Russia, but are now also sold to clients around the world. Last year's exports totalled \$368 million.

Weapons

Controversial during wartime but quite lucrative, Ukraine's weapons industry remains relatively robust as it searches for new markets following a 2014 ban on arms sales to Russia. The country sells tanks around the world, as well as locally produced small arms, earning \$323 million in 2015 according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Ammonia

Pumped into Odesa on the world's longest ammonia pipeline from the Russian city of Tolyatti, Ukraine exports nearly seven percent of the world's ammonia, earning it \$251.9 million last year.

Railway locomotives

Ukraine has two main locomotive factories - one in the Dnipro River city of Kremenchug, and another in occupied Luhansk. While the Luhansk factory has been unable to continue production because of Russia's war in the area, Kremenchug has kept up a steady pace of production, making \$210.8 million in exports last year, according to Ukrstat.

Alcohol

Ukraine has seen some international expansion of its alcohol brands, with Zaporizhia-based distillery Khortytsia pushing a plan to expand sales into Asia. Sending booze to foreign markets earned Ukraine \$183.6 million last year.



A harvester gathers grain in Kyiv Oblast in July 2016. Wheat is one of Ukraine's largest exports, with the crop mainly going to the European Union and the Middle East. (UNIAN)

Electricity

Western Ukraine has an electricity surplus and sells power to Hungary, earning the country \$150 million last year.

Shoes

Shevchenko - shoemaker, in Ukrainian - is one of the country's most common last names, and the country itself is a shoemaker, exporting \$144.7 million worth of shoes last year in sales ranging from bulk producers coming from large shoemaking factories in Dnipro and Zaporizhia, while smaller producers like Kyiv's Alina Kachorovskaya sell

hand-made, luxury shoes to individual western clients.

Fluid pumps

Ukraine made \$117 million from fluid pump exports in 2015, selling them mostly to other Eastern European and Central Asian nations.

Leather and fur

In addition to meat and other livestock related exports, Ukraine operates a fairly lucrative trade in leather and fur. Ukrstat reports that the country made \$114 million last year from animal products.

Honey

Ukraine produces the largest amount of honey per capita of any country, with 1.5 percent of the population engaged in beekeeping or honey production, according to Ukrstat. As Europe's largest honey producer, Ukraine earned \$95.9 million from honey exports last year.

Spacecraft and aircraft

According to Hubs.UA, relying on information from the fiscal service, most of the country's space exports go to the planet-exploring nations of North Korea and South Sudan. Those exports, built

TOTAL AMOUNT

of Ukrainian exports in 2015

\$ 50.9 billion

TOP 10 COUNTRIES

to which Ukraine sent the most exports from Jan. to May 2016



*Not including data for Crimea and occupied territories of the Donbas.
 By Stella Shabliovskaya, Kyiv Post
 Source: Ukrstat

using facilities left over from the Soviet Union, earned Ukraine \$89 million.

Books and newspapers

Ukraine sold \$82 million worth of books and newspapers abroad last year, according to Ukrstat.

Coal

Coal exports have fallen since Russian-backed separatists declared two phony republics in the Donbas, sparking a war that destroyed east Ukraine's economy. Though large amounts of coal reportedly continue to leave the country via smuggling, Ukrstat recorded \$53.6 million in export revenues for 2015.

Explosives

With its still-operating former Soviet chemical plants and weapons factories, Ukraine is a strong regional producer of explosives, making \$7 million from exports in 2015. ■

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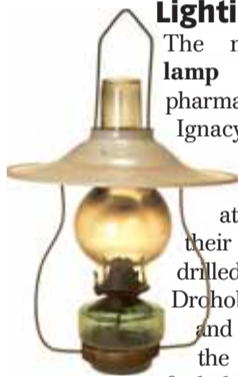
Ukraine's contributions to the world of science

BY YULIANA ROMANYSHYN
ROMANYSHYN@KYIVPOST.COM

Before Ukraine won independence 25 years ago, most of its inventions were credited to the Soviet Union, the Russian Empire or the Polish state.

Some discoveries, such as the work done on X-rays by Ivan Puluj, are disputed or not widely known, but several of them are widely recognized and have contributed significantly to the scientific revolution. Nevertheless, each of the following inventions were developed in Ukraine or conceived by a scientist of Ukrainian descent.

Lighting up



The modern **kerosene lamp** was designed by pharmacists Jan Zeh and Ignacy Lukasiewicz in 1853 in Lviv, which was part of Poland at that time. For their lamp, they used oil drilled near the town of Drohobych in Lviv Oblast, and purified it to obtain the lamp oil used to fuel their lighting devices.

Today, the Gasova Lampa (Kerosene Lamp) restaurant and museum in Lviv, which is dedicated to the two inventors, features a collection of kerosene lamps. Bronze statues of the inventors adorn the facade of the restaurant building on 20 Virnemska St. in Lviv.

The first mass-produced **helicopter** was designed by Ukrainian aircraft designer Igor Sikorsky. After immigrating to the United States in 1919, he founded Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in 1923. His Vought-



The Sikorsky S-64 Skycrane cargo helicopter is lifting a house. The machine was designed by Sikorsky Aircraft as a civil version of the CH-54 Tarhe for the United States Army in 1962. The current version of the heavy-lift helicopter is made by the Erickson Air-Crane company. (Courtesy)

Sikorsky VS-300, designed in 1939, was a single-engine helicopter with a single three-blade rotor. Sikorsky pioneered invention of the rotor configuration is used by most helicopters today.

Sergey Korolyov, born in Zhytomyr, was for years the Soviet Union's leading rocket engineer and spacecraft designer, and he personally oversaw the assembly of the first artificial Earth satellite, **Sputnik**. This invention was the starting gun for the space race, part of the larger Cold War confrontation between the Soviet bloc and the United States and its allies. Korolyov was also the chief designer of the **Vostok** rocket program, and was behind the first human spaceflight, by Yuri Gagarin, who completed the first low Earth

orbit on April 12, 1961. As a rocket designer, he also developed the Soviet Union's Intercontinental ballistic missile program.

Physicist and inventor Ivan Puluj is thought to have discovered the use of X-rays for medical imaging, but his contribution has been disputed. Wilhelm Röntgen, who appears to have discovered **X-rays** 14 years after Puluj, but is considered as the inventor of the X-ray lamp. However, Puluj designed the first X-ray tube, with which he took very high resolution pictures of broken limbs. His device was called the Puluj lamp.

Fighting disease

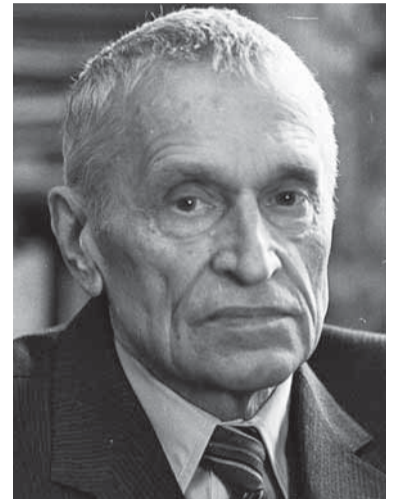
The world's first **electric tram** and **railway electrification system** were developed by engineer and

inventor Fyodor Pirotsky in Lviv. In 1880, in Saint Petersburg, Russia, he modified a horse-drawn tram to be powered by electricity. His experimental form of public transport ran for about a month. Pirotsky also met with German entrepreneur Carl Heinrich von Siemens, and the Siemens company designed its own electric tram in 1881.

The modern **postal code** was first introduced in the city of Kharkiv in December 1932. Although the code system of numbers and letters was abandoned in the Soviet Union in 1939, it is now used around the globe.

Anti-cholera and anti-plague vaccines were discovered by Berdyansk-born Jewish-Ukrainian Waldemar Haffkine. Risking his life, he performed his first experimental vaccinations on himself, but his discovery wasn't widely accepted by his senior colleagues. Haffkine moved to India, where a cholera pandemic was ravaging the country. There, he applied his invention to save the lives of several million people from bubonic plague, and won widespread public recognition. The plague Laboratory in Mumbai was named the Haffkine Institute in his honor.

The world's **first kidney transplant** was conducted by surgeon Yuriy Voronyi, from Kherson. In 1933, he took the kidney from a person who had died six hours previously, and transplanted it into the body of a woman. The kidney operated normally and was fully connected to blood circulation system. However, the transplant recipient died just two days after the transplant surgery due to the incompatibility of the recipient's blood group. Nevertheless,



Renowned heart surgeon Mykola Amosov. (UNIAN)

Voronyi's groundbreaking work proved the viability of the procedure, and highlighted the important problem of tissue rejection in future research.

Heart surgeon Mykola Amosov pioneered a number of new methods of surgical treatment for heart disease. He performed the first mitral valve replacement and introduced a method of artificial blood circulation to the Soviet Union. Amosov created and introduced into practice an anti-thrombotic heart prosthesis for the first time in the world in 1965. He spent most of career in Kyiv and was a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Science.

Window power

A more modern medical discovery was made by a team of scientists in independent Ukraine – the invention of the **antibiotic batumin**. In 2005, scientists from the Institute of Microbiology and Virology designed a drug that was extremely effective against the staphylococci bacteria. However, the new antibiotic is not yet being produced in Ukraine. Instead, Belgium bought a license to manufacture batumin.

In 2013, Kharkiv citizen Anatoliy Malychin invented a new method for carrying out **blood tests** without direct contact with blood. He designed a device with a sensor that tests 131 indexes of person's blood condition through contact with skin. The procedure takes around five minutes, while the laboratory method requires a day to test blood. Malychin has sold his devices in China, Germany, and Egypt, and to several clinics in Ukraine.

In one of Ukraine's most recent innovations, **blinds** that generate solar energy have been designed by inventors from Ukrainian company SolarGaps. Installed on windows, these venetian blinds can generate over 100 kilowatts of energy a month – enough to cover average electricity consumption of a household in Ukraine. The energy generated can be used either to heat an apartment, or it can be sold to the state electricity company at the feed-in tariff. ■




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How independence came to be, from those who witnessed it

Memories from page 3

"It was a fateful decision, and I have repeated, am repeating and will repeat that Ukraine is happy because of that. Well, I'm financially secure today, I'm in a better position. But I have talked with people who aren't as in such a secure position as I am. They tell me 'Mr. Plyushch, we're ready to go about without clothing for three years, but have Ukraine.' So, I'm happy for those people, as well as for myself. I wonder if people (who argued against independence) remember that even if they had the money for a car, the car could only be bought if you had connections, or if you waited in a line for more than 10 years. They've all forgotten about that."

Vyacheslav Kyrlyenko

was a student activist and one of the initiators of the Granite Revolution against strengthening ties between the republics of the Soviet



Union in October 1990. The Student Union, of which Kyrlyenko was a leader, organized several mass protests in the lead up to independence. A core group of 200 students participated in the hunger strike on Kyiv's central square, which lasted for 16 days, while dozen thousands of others camped there in support. The students erected around 50 tents and occupied Kyiv's central square, which was later renamed Maidan Nezalezhnosti, and which was the focal point of the Orange Revolution in 2004 and the EuroMaidan Revolution in 2013-14. The activists opposed the signing of a new union agreement, as proposed by Moscow, to bind the republics of the Soviet Union more closely together. Multi-party parliamentary elections and the nationalization of Communist Party property were also among the activists' demands. The peaceful protest led to the dropping of the proposed union agreement, multi-party elections, and the resignation of the head of the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Vitaliy Masol.

"When the Soviet coup started

in Moscow, activists of Ukrainian Students Union and those who started the hunger strike launched some resistance. People gradually gathered on the Maidan (Independence Square). But thank God the coup was defeated, and the parliament in an emergency session proclaimed the Act of Independence under pressure from the citizens, and at the same time because many of them (the communists) were afraid of an uprising. I was among those who stood outside (the parliament building). We knew many of the lawmakers, and found out that the act had been written. Then the Ukrainian flag was raised over the parliament.

"However, when we came back to Kyiv on Aug. 19, we had completely different thoughts. We thought that dark times were coming to the country for everyone. But five days after the coup (in Moscow) ... independence was declared.

"For me, it is the greatest holiday, which I celebrate every year. But – no matter who is in charge of Russia, but especially now with (Russian President Vladimir) Putin – every year it is a difficult

experience for Russia to see that Ukraine is still an independent state. We have to fight for independence and sovereignty every day, because the Russian Empire will be (located) close to us forever.

"These were the most important events in my life in political terms. Because, after many hundreds of years of struggle, Ukraine managed to declare independence without bloodshed. But nothing happens without blood. A war for independence is taking place now. But now we have a grown up generation, born after 1991, and so nobody will be able to take (our independence) with their bare hands."

Bohdan Hawrylyshyn



is Ukrainian-Canadian an economist, expert on issues of public administration and international business, and lecturer at several universities in Canada and Switzerland. He has also served as an advisor to the Ukrainian government. His current activity is concentrated

around philanthropy in Ukraine's next generation. Hawrylyshyn as was present the day of the vote

"The day before (the vote for independence), I heard that there would be a special session of Verkhovna Rada. I managed to order a plane ticket (from Geneva), went directly from Boryspil (airport) to the Verkhovna Rada. There was a break in the session. Seven people were sitting around a round table outside the office of the chairman of the Verkhovna Rada. They invited me to join them. The subject under discussion was what to call the country that we would declare independent: The Democratic Republic of Ukraine, the Republic of Ukraine? I simply said: "Why not call it Ukraine?" There was instant agreement.

"The most important part of the celebration for me was when we looked out of the windows of the second floor of the Verkhovna Rada, where an enormous crowd had gathered around the building, all beaming with pride and joy.

"I still feel very elated that such an important decision was made so quickly, spontaneously, unanimously." ■

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Deadline: May 16, 2017

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Deadline: June 1, 2017

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries."

Established in 1946, it supports academic exchanges with 155 countries of the world.

The Fulbright Program will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in Ukraine in 2017.

Ukrainian academic institutions of higher learning and research institutions who wish to host U.S. scholars and specialists can do so through the **Fulbright Specialist Program**. Ukrainian educational and research institutions can invite U.S. faculty and professionals to collaborate with their counterparts on curriculum and faculty development; institutional planning; participation in conferences, seminars, and workshops; and intensive teaching activities with students and faculty. The program awards grants ranging from 2 to 6 weeks.

Deadline: Rolling

For more information on Fulbright awards, eligibility, and selection procedures, visit the Fulbright Program in Ukraine page: <http://www.fulbright.org.ua>

Grant Opportunities for U.S. Citizens

U.S. citizens wishing to apply for the Fulbright can visit: <https://eca.state.gov/fulbright> <http://www.cies.org> <http://us.fulbrightonline.org>

25 interesting places to visit across Ukraine

BY ANNA YAKUTENKO
YAKUTENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

Ukraine's marvelous and varied landscapes range from the lofty Carpathian Mountains in the west, the beautiful forestland of the north and the immense wheat fields and picturesque sandy beaches of the east and south.

But there is even more to Ukraine than the vistas found in tourist brochures: numerous picturesque lakes of pure, clear water; huge, mysterious caves; and even one of Europe's largest deserts can be all be found within the borders of this vast country of nearly 604,000 square kilometers.

Apart from stunning countryside, Ukraine is dotted with dozens of attractive old cities boasting architecture from a wide range of times and cultures.

The Kyiv Post has compiled a list of the top 25 tourist destinations in Ukraine, and describes here a few of the less well-known ones

The Tunnel of Love

The Tunnel of Love is a four-kilometer, leafy, natural passageway formed by trees and bushes located on the railway line between the towns of Klevan and Orzhiv in Rivne Oblast in the northwestern Ukraine.

The tunnel became a must-see attraction for couples in love, not just for its beauty, but for the story behind its construction: According to local legend, the railway line across the forest was built by a man who was looking for a shortest path to visit his beloved. Less romantically, the 6.4 kilometer line, 4.9 kilometers of which is covered by a roof of vegetation, is a private railway line, still in use, that serves a fiberboard factory.

How to get there: Take a train to Rivne and then take a local bus to Klevan.

Dolyna Nartsysiv (The Valley of Daffodils)

Dolyna Nartsysiv is a broad valley carpeted with millions of daffodils in the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, located four kilometers from Khust



The Fort of Baturyn in Chernihiv Oblast, a military and administrative center of the Zaporizhian Host. The Palace of Kyrylo Rozumovsky, the last hetman of the host, is situated nearby. (UNIAN)

in Zakarpattia Oblast in western Ukraine. The valley is included in UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The valley formed about 2.6 million years ago during the late Pliocene epoch, as an Ice Age began to grip Europe. The valley's unique species of daffodil, *Narcissus angustifolius*, grows there over an area of 256 square kilometers.

Every March tourists from all over Ukraine come to see the daffodil flower across the whole valley.

How to get there: Take the Kyiv-Mykacheve train, then a bus to

Khust, and walk three kilometers to the valley, or take a taxi from Khust.

Oleshkivski Sands

The Oleshkivski Sands is a largest expanse of sand in Ukraine, located in southern Kherson Oblast. The desert features crescent-shaped dunes that rise to heights of five meters high, covering an area of 161,200 hectares. The Oleshkivski Sands are undeveloped as a tourist destination, so visitors will need to stock up on food and water when making a trip to the area. There is sparse vegetation among the dunes,

and the area is surrounded by trees planted to prevent the dunes creeping further over the land. The sand is light and dusty, so sandstorms also sometimes occur, though the winds in the area tend not to be strong.

How to get there: Take a train from Kyiv to Kherson, then a bus to Radensk, a small town on the western edge of the desert.

Kolomyia (Museum of pysankas)

Kolomyia, a city of 60,000 people in Ivano-Frankivska Oblast of western Ukraine, is home to Ukraine's largest

museum of pysankas – traditional Easter eggs decorated with folk designs. The museum's collection includes more than 6,000 unique pysankas collected from various regions of Ukraine. The museum building, located at 43 Vyacheslav Chornovil Ave. in Kolomyia, is made in the shape of a giant pysanka some 13.5 meters (about 45 feet) high.

How to get there: Take a train from Kyiv to Ivano-Frankivsk, and then a local bus to Kolomyia.

Podilsky Tovtry

The Podilski Tovtry National

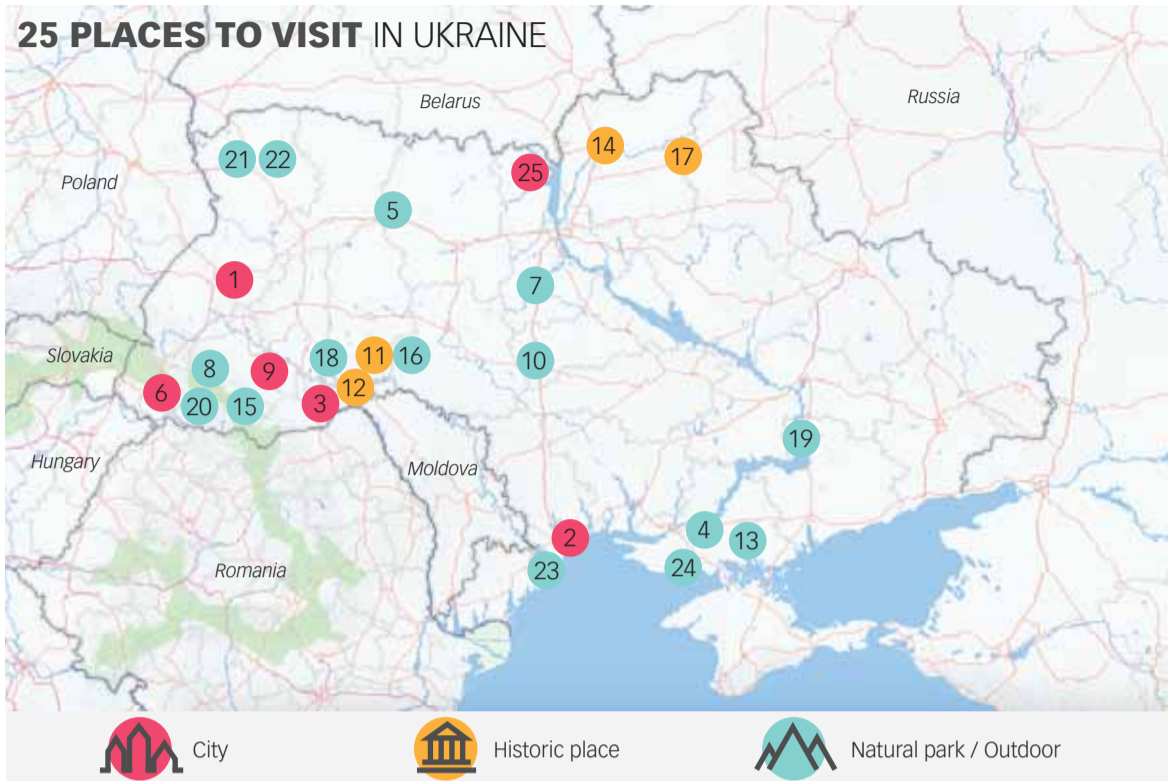


The Museum of Pysankas, or traditional Ukrainian painted eggs, in Kolomyia, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast. (Ukrafoto)



Hoverla, Ukraine's highest mountain, rises to a height of 2,061 meters in Ukraine's Carpathian Mountains. The mountain sits on the border of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast and Zakarpattia Oblast. (Ukrinform)

25 PLACES TO VISIT IN UKRAINE



By Stella Shablivska, Kyiv Post

1. **City of Lviv** (Lviv Oblast)
2. **City of Odesa** (Odesa Oblast)
3. **City of Chernivtsi** (Chernivtsi Oblast)
4. **Oleshkiivski Sands** (desert in Kherson Oblast)
5. **The Tunnel of Love** (Klevan – Orzhiv, Rivne Oblast)
6. **Mukacheve** (Zakarpattia Oblast)
7. **Oleksandriivsky Park** (Bila Tserkva, Kyiv Oblast)
8. **Senyvyr Lake** (Zakarpattia Oblast)
9. **Kolomyia** (Museum of Pysankas, Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast)
10. **Sophia Park** (Uman, Cherkasy Oblast)
11. **Kamyanets-Podilsky Castle** (Khmelnitskiy Oblast)
12. **Khotyn Fortress** (Chernivtsi Oblast)
13. **Askania-Nova** (Kherson Oblast)
14. **Antoniyevi Pechery** (St. Antony's Caves, Chernihiv Oblast)
15. **Hoverla** (Ukraine's highest mountain, on border of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast and Zakarpattia Oblast)
16. **Podilsky Tovtry** (Khmelnitskiy Oblast)
17. **Kyrylo Rozumovsky Palace** (Chernihiv Oblast)
18. **Dniester Canyon** (Ternopil Oblast)
19. **Khortystya Island** (Zaporizhia Oblast)
20. **Dolyna Nartsyiv** (Valley of daffodils, Zakarpattia Oblast)
21. **Shatsky Lakes** (Lutsk Oblast)
22. **Svityaz Lake** (Lutsk Oblast)
23. **Zatoka** (Odesa Oblast)
24. **Dzharylhach Island** (Kherson Oblast)
25. **Prypyat** (Chornobyl Exclusion Zone)

Environmental Park is a 2,600-square-kilometer area of limestone ridges, formed from ancient coral beds that have been cut through by the Dniester River in Khmelnytsky Oblast. The area has rich and unique biodiversity, with more than 1,700 types of plants growing in the reserve, 60 of which are listed in Ukraine's Red Book of endangered species. Forests cover 3,015 hectares of the reserve land.

How to get there: Take a train to Khmelnytsky or Chernivtsi, then a local bus to the Podilsky Tovtry reserve.

Askania-Nova

Askania-Nova is a biosphere reserve in Kherson Oblast that includes a 170-hectare botanical garden and open steppe land inhabited by wild animals. Founded in 1874, the reserve has more than 30 rare types of plants and mammals, 270 types of birds, and around 2,000 types of insects. The list of rare animals include antelopes, Przewalski's horse, bison and deer. Askania-Nova is open to visitors from the spring to fall, from April 1 to Nov. 10.

How to get there: Take a train to

Kherson and then a local bus to the reserve.

Baturyn (Kyrylo Rozumovsky's Palace)

The palace of Kyrylo Rozumovsky, Ukraine's last hetman, or military commander of the Zaporizhian Host (a medieval Cossack political institution), nestles in the historic town Baturyn in Chernihiv Oblast in northern Ukraine. The spectacular three-floor palace with white columns was a present from Empress of Russia Elizabeth to Rozumovsky, and was designed by the Scottish archi-

tect Charles Cameron, and is considered a masterpiece. Baturyn Palace served as the seat of government of the hetmanate until 1764, when the office of Hetman of the Zaporizhian Host held by Rozumovsky was abolished by Russian Empress Catherine the Great, and the Russian empire absorbed the territories of Ukraine.

How to get there: Take a train to Bakhmach, and then a local bus to Baturyn.

Sophia Park in Uman

Sofiyivsky Park is an arboretum 179.2 hectares in area in the city

of Uman in Cherkaska Oblast in central Ukraine. The park belongs to Ukraine's Academy of Science, an organization that unites researchers from all over Ukraine. It has around 500,000 visitors a year according to its website. The park was created in 1796 by a rich Polish magnate, Stanislav Schensny Pototsky, in as a birthday present for his beautiful Greek wife, Sophia.

How to get there: Take a bus from Kyiv to Uman, or if traveling by car take the E-95 highway south from Kyiv. Uman is about 180 kilometers from the Ukrainian capital. ■



Bison graze on steppeland in the Askania-Nova bioserve in Kherson Oblast. The reserve is home to a range of rare animals that are native to Ukraine (UNIAN)



The Tunnel of Love near Klevan in Rivne Oblast. The picturesque private railway line is popular with couples from Ukraine and beyond as the perfect place for a romantic walk. (Dmytro Chapman)

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25

top IT startups, tech firms, online shops and innovations

BY DENYS KRASNIKOV
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Over the last 25 years, Ukraine's information technology sector has come from nowhere to become the country's fastest-growing segment and one of its leading hopes for the future.

And even though it's still not on a par with agriculture and metallurgy, the country's traditional powerhouses, the excitement over the prospects of this young sector is high.

There's good reason for that.

Ukraine may already have the largest information technology labor force in Europe – some 100,000 IT specialists – and it now exports billions of dollars worth of software to the world: In 2015 alone, Ukraine earned about \$2.5 billion from exports of the country's software and IT services. Moreover, Ukraine's tech industry is showing accelerating growth, year after year.

Apart from providing outsourced IT services, Ukrainians have started building outstanding tech products and founded companies that have been snapped up by tech-savvy giants like Google, Apple, and Snapchat. The country's rapidly expanding e-commerce sector is helping more and more Ukrainians buy online every year.

And while many are trying to attract buyers for their companies abroad, or move their operations abroad themselves, many others are focusing on developing the next big thing here, in Ukraine, and for Ukrainians.

The following are Ukraine's top 25 most famous, useful and successful tech-related innovations and e-commerce companies.

ProZorro

The ProZorro system is a tech innovation introduced by the state as a way to tackle the widespread corruption in Ukraine's state procurement. Developed by anti-corruption nongovernmental organization Transparency International, ProZorro, has saved the state about Hr 2.6 billion (\$104 million) since the start of its use at the end of 2015.



Deputy Economy Minister Maxim Nefyodov (L), executive director at Transparency International Ukraine Yaroslav Yurchyshyn (C) and U.S. foreign service officer George Kent give a briefing on the final phase of the transition of all government procurement to the ProZorro system of electronic public procurement at the Ukrainian Crisis Media Center in Kyiv on July 21. (UNIAN)

Starting from Aug. 1, its use became mandatory in all state purchases. ProZorro's developers claim that the system will save taxpayers Hr 55 million (\$2.2 million) every day.

Ecoisme

Ukrainian startup Ecoisme develops smart-home solutions, with hardware and software that allows more efficient energy consumption and remote control of electrical home appliances. The young company has won prestigious international awards, raised funding on global crowdfunding platform Indiegogo, and won a place in a U.K. based tech-acceleration program run by Richard Branson's Virgin Media and U.S. Techstars. Ecoisme CEO and co-founder Ivan Pasichnyk was included on the list of 30 of the most

successful people in Europe under 30 years old in the industry sector compiled by U.S. magazine Forbes.

Looksery

Leading-edge messenger application Snapchat, which now has over 150 million active users, owes a lot of its popularity to its classy lenses feature, which was designed and developed by Ukrainians from Odesa. In 2013, Looksery founder Victor Shaburov and his team started developing an application that could do real time facial modification of photos and videos on mobile platforms. In less than two years, Looksery was bought up by Snapchat, which reportedly paid a record sum for a Ukrainian startup – \$150 million.

iGov

Pressure to remove the bureaucratic obstacles to delivering government services in Ukraine has come largely from the ground up, from civil activists who know how cutting-edge technologies can chop through red tape. Developed by IT volunteers, iGov is a state administrative services portal that allows citizens to order official documents certified with e-signatures and e-stamps, meaning its users can sidestep the country's notorious bureaucratic paper chase and endless lines in state offices. In the regions of the country where it is already up and running, the portal provides more than 300 types of paperwork, such

as marriage certificates, subsidy documents, criminal record certificates, and so on.

Viewdle

Google image search has become a boon to journalists and the public alike, but few people know this innovation is a product of Ukrainian tech knowhow. Founded in 2016 by two Ukrainians, the startup Viewdle created a mobile-focused visual analysis company creating computer vision and facial recognition technologies for consumer products. While raising more than \$12 million in funding from various individual investors and venture capital funds to create this technology, Viewdle caught the eye of tech giant Google. In

October 2012, according to Bloomberg, the U.S. company wrote a cheque for \$45 million and swallowed up Viewdle. The Ukrainian team moved to the United States, and merged with Google's Motorola Mobility, which in 2014 was bought by China's Lenovo Group Ltd. for \$3.2 billion.

The Kyiv Post's IT coverage is sponsored by Beetroot, Ciklum and SoftServe. The content is independent of the donors. ■



Ecoisme designs household sensors to track energy usage by domestic appliances in the home. The data is then sent to users' smartphones along with energy-saving tips and alerts about devices left turned on. (Ecoisme)

October 2012,

IT director at Privat Bank Dmitry Dubilet speaks at a press conference in Kyiv on June 16, 2015 while presenting the iGov electronic services portal, which he helped create. (UNIAN)



20 outstanding firms

KM Core

KM Core holding company manages the assets of high-tech companies, and makes money by investing in innovation.

iBlazr

iBlazr is developing a portable camera flash for iOS, Android devices and Windows phones.

Nova Poshta

Nova Poshta, a private postal delivery and logistics company, has a nationwide network of 1,800 branches in nearly 800 cities and towns.

Eleks

Eleks is one of the oldest Ukrainian software developers, employing about 1,000 people globally. Born in same year as independent Ukraine, it has developed steadily, and now has offices in the United Kingdom, Poland and the United States.

Rozetka

Rozetka, Ukraine's biggest online retailer, currently has a 40 percent share of the country's online shopping market.

DepositPhotos

DepositPhotos is a New York-based but originally Ukrainian royalty-free microstock photography agency.

Grammarly

Grammarly is a web-based service that allows users to upload a text in English and have it scanned for errors.

Petcube

Petcube is the developer of the Petcube Camera, a device that allows pet owners to monitor and even play with their furry companions remotely.

Readdle

Readdle is a producer of mobile iOS applications focuses on time management apps, and software to make documents, books, images and PDF files easier to read, edit and share.

Prometheus

Prometheus is a nonprofit educational technology company that offers open online courses for Ukrainians given by lecturers from country's top universities.

Terrasoft

Terrasoft designs its own customer relationship management software.

SolarGaps

SolarGaps has developed a device that combines solar panels with venetian blinds to allow those who live in apartments to generate their own electricity.

Zakaz

Zakaz is a Ukrainian online grocery delivery service.

Highbrow

Highbrow is an email-based learning service that sends bite-sized chunks of educational courses to its users e-mail inbox every morning.



Terrasoft's software design team employs more than 500 people in the company's offices in Kyiv, Moscow, Boston and London. Ukraine's biggest online retailer, Rozetka, and leading employment service HeadHunter are among Terrasoft's clients. (Volodymyr Petrov)

TripMyDream

A website for travelers, users of TripMyDream can select a vacation destination from a range of options that company's researchers have collected data on.

Clickky

Clickky is a platform for publishers to monetize mobile traffic in emerging markets.

Preply

Preply is a website which provides an online service for finding language tutors.

eFarmer

The eFarmer startup is creating an app for

farmers that, together with a satellite antenna, will give precise information about location to develop the most efficient way to work a field.

MarsHopper

A NASA competition prizewinner, the MarsHopper team of Ukrainians has invented a robotic space probe fueled by carbon dioxide that can skip around the surface of the Mars to explore it.

AgroMonitor

AgroMonitor is an Internet of Things (IoT) project to help monitor and analyze farmers' fields.

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Key events since independence

Independent Ukraine experienced momentous events in its short, 25-year history, including two popular revolutions one decade apart and Russia's ongoing war against the nation. The granting of autonomous status to the Crimean peninsula and its subsequent annexation by Russia, the surrender of its nuclear weapons arsenal and adoption of the first Constitution are among the key events that continue to shape Ukraine today. (Compiled by Isobel Koshiw).

Vote on independence

Ukraine held a referendum on independence and simultaneous presidential elections on Dec. 1, after a failed coup against Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev took place in Moscow in August. Ninety-two percent of the population nationally voted for Ukraine to become independent of the Soviet Union, with 54 percent voting for in Crimea. The former Chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Soviet, Leonid Kravchuk, was elected Ukraine's first president.

In the run-up to the independence referendum, 300,000 supporters of Ukraine's pro-democracy Rukh Party created a human chain that stretched from Kyiv to Lviv. Its participants raised Ukraine's blue and yellow flag for the first time since 1921.

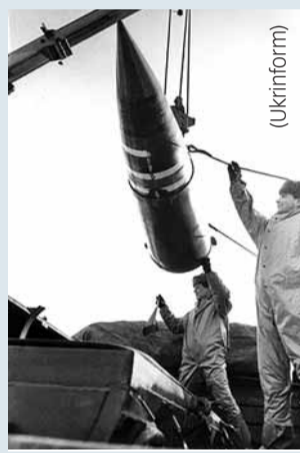


(Ukrinform)



Introduction of the hryvnia

The first five years of independence were particularly tough in Ukraine. Hyperinflation made it impossible to introduce a proper currency, which had been designed and printed as early as 1992. Instead, Ukrainians used the Ukrainian karbovanets, or "coupons," a transitional currency. During the two-week currency introduction period in September 1996, both currencies could be used, but businesses were required to give change only in hryvnias. Bank accounts were automatically converted.



(Ukrinform)

The Budapest Memorandum

An agreement reached among the United States, Britain, Russia and Ukraine stipulated that Ukraine must give up its arsenal of nuclear weapons – at that time the third largest in the world after the United States and Russia. In exchange, the three global powers promised they would never threaten or use force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine. The weapons were transferred to Russia or destroyed. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, it has become painfully obvious that the agreement did not bind any of the signatories to defend Ukraine in the case of invasion by a foreign power.

1991

1994

1996

2000

Crimean autonomy

Shortly before the independence referendum, the Soviet authorities in Moscow upgraded the Crimean peninsula to an autonomous republic of the Soviet Union. After much debate, in May 1992, Crimea agreed to remain part of newly independent Ukraine, but its local authorities persuaded then President Leonid Kravchuk to expand their rights. They were given the right to draft their own budget and manage property through the Crimean parliament. In hindsight, many argue that the peninsula's autonomous status distanced it from the rest of Ukraine.



(Ukrinform)

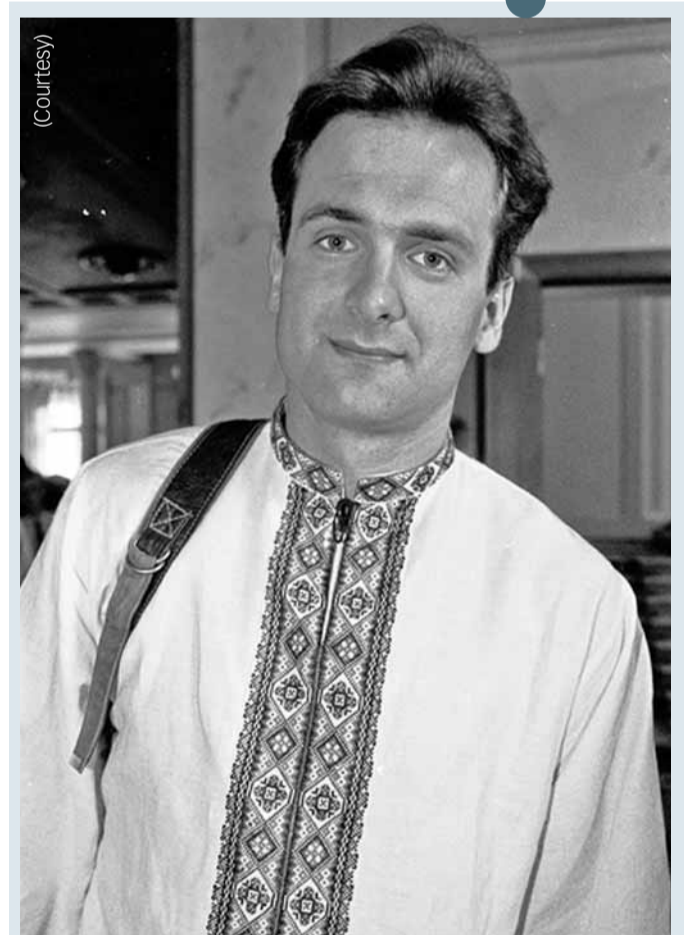


(Ukrinform)

Ukraine's first Constitution

Ukraine's first Constitution placed a great deal of power in the hands of the president. The president could appoint the prime minister and dismiss members of the cabinet. In 2004, after the Orange Revolution, parliament voted to amend the constitution so that parliament would nominate the prime minister, and only the prime minister would be able to dismiss ministers. Parliament was also responsible for approving the cabinet, although the minister of defense and foreign affairs would be nominated by the president.

The 2004 amendments were controversially overturned in 2010 by Ukraine's Constitutional Court, giving then President Viktor Yanukovich more power. The day before Yanukovich fled Ukraine in disgrace, on Feb. 21, 2014, parliament voted to restore the 2004 amendments.



(Courtesy)

The Gongadze murder

On Sept. 16, 2000, journalist Georgiy Gongadze disappeared. Villagers discovered his headless body in woods in Kyiv Oblast. Recordings secretly taped by the bodyguard of then-President Leonid Kuchma implicated the president, the interior minister and other top officials in the murder. The incident sparked a wave of anti-Kuchma protests and created a strong opposition against the authorities.



2004: Orange Revolution

The Leonid Kuchma administration grew unpopular because of corruption and repression. The final straw came in the 2004 presidential elections, when Kuchma's preferred candidate, Viktor Yanukovich, was accused of rigging the elections. Protesters took to the streets of Kyiv and other cities calling for a re-run. In December, the pro-Western candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, won the re-vote, despite being seriously poisoned during the election campaign.



Loss of Crimea

During the chaos that followed the EuroMaidan Revolution, Russian soldiers without insignia, dubbed "little green men," started to appear on the Crimean peninsula. Left with no back up from Kyiv, Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea were forced to abandon their bases and, ultimately, the peninsula, without a fight. Some, including Ukrainian Navy Admiral Denis Berezovsky, defected to Russia. Russian soldiers also occupied the Crimean Parliament. Russia installed a prime minister who declared Crimean independence from Ukraine and called for a referendum on accession to Russia. In the run-up to the sham referendum, clashes broke out in which three people were killed and dozens went missing. The illegal referendum was widely condemned internationally. Russia's annexation led to the first round of Western sanctions against the Kremlin.

Yanukovich in power

Yanukovich won narrowly in the second runoff of the 2010 presidential elections against ex-Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Yanukovich's allies and financial backers had extensive business interests with Russia. His victory, therefore, was seen as a turn towards Russian President Vladimir Putin and a blow against Ukraine's democratic aspirations.



2004

2010

2013

2014

EuroMaidan Revolution

In November 2013, Yanukovich failed to sign a European Union-Ukraine Association Agreement that had been initiated under Yushchenko. Students and activists took to the streets to pressure the president into signing the agreement. The protests quickly turned into an outlet for anger against the Yanukovich regime in general, and attracted millions of people across the country. On Feb. 22, Yanukovich fled to Russia after days of violence, during which police snipers shot around 100 protesters dead on the streets.



Russia's war against Ukraine in the Donbas

Pro-Russian protests began to take place in several cities in eastern and southern Ukraine in spring 2014, most calling for accession to Russia. Armed protesters, many of whom were allegedly Russian special forces, took over strategic local government buildings such as regional administrations and headquarters of the Ukrainian security services. Ukrainian forces were able to recapture most of the buildings but were too late to advance into eastern areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The Russian occupying forces in the Donbas were heavily armed. From April until the February 2016, several battles took place in the cities of Mariupol, Sloviansk, Kramatorsk, Adiyivka, Donetsk and Debaltseve between the separatists and Ukrainian government forces. The human rights situation "remains extremely grim," the United Nations reported in June 2016. Russia has so far not moved to annex the territories, but is continuing to supply ammunition, weapons and tanks to its proxy forces.

To date, more than 10,000 people have been killed and 21,500 injured in Russia's war against Ukraine, according to the UN. The dead include 298 passengers and crew on board a Malaysian airliner, which was shot down by a BUK anti-aircraft missile on July 17, 2014. There is clear evidence the BUK complex was sent into Ukraine by Russia, and that it was operated by Russian soldiers.

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