

Ukrainian Personalities on the War in Ukraine and the “Collective West”

Within the framework of the “Special Meeting in the Wave of the War in Ukraine” organized by the European Journalists Association(EJ) in the Romanian city Timisoara on May 9, 2022, a meaningful online meeting with high representatives of the media, political and scientific world who were present in the headquarter of the national news agency of Ukraine Ukrinform in Kyiv was held.

EJ colleagues had the opportunity to ask them questions on quite topical issues, like For what reason didn't Ukraine grant Donbas republics with autonomy referred to the Minsk agreements? How free can we consider Ukrainian journalists and mass media? In the following, some of the answers are reported.

Pavlo Hai-Nyzhnyk, *Doctor of History, Deputy Director of the Scientific Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.*



Russia says red and Ukraine is blue. What is the right color?

“Western society must realize that Russia is waging war not only against Ukraine but in its person against the right to choose, against Western consciousness and worldview, against democratic values. Therefore, this war is a war against the entire civilized world. The Russian Federation violates the rules of war; it uses anti-human methods of destruction aimed at overthrowing the Ukrainian state and the destruction (genocide) of the Ukrainian people themselves. So for Ukraine and Ukrainians, this war is a war for life!”

“Even during the war in Ukraine, democratic freedoms are supported and preserved. Among those present in this hall are opposition public and political figures, and all of us freely communicate with you – representatives of the Western press. In Ukraine, there is free criticism of the authorities' actions; in particular, I recently criticized the President regarding the strategic vision of victory in this war on one of the central TV channels. However, the whole Ukrainian people and society sincerely support the government, especially the Armed Forces of Ukraine in this war”.

“The Russian Federation must only stop its aggression against Ukraine and be defeated, including the Act of Surrender. This capitulation should not be limited to the liberation of the occupied Ukrainian territories. The whole world must unite and jointly inflict a crushing defeat on Russia, including its environment, and achieve recognition of the Kremlin's surrender and a comprehensive victory over Russia, its military power, ideology, regime, and internal order structure. Otherwise, this war will return in 3-5

years because Russia has enough inner human, material, and energy resources and potential capacities for recovering to withstand Western sanctions or circumvent them at the same time and recreate its efforts to carry out revenge. And the unfinished war to defeat Russia can turn into an eternal war.

You can think over if the Allies in World War II, having liberated their territories, did not cross the borders of Germany, stopped at the edge of the liberated Soviet Union or France, and allowed Hitler to rule further and preserve the National Socialist regime in Germany. Would the war have been ended, and would it not have resumed with a new crushing force? Can you simulate a situation where western allies do not overthrow the Nazi regime in Germany, debunk national socialist ideology in its society, and turn this country into a qualitatively and ideological new state-political reality? Would it be possible to stop the war?"

"It will not be possible to pay off the enemy. The West tried to appease and reassure Putin and Russia by allowing the withdrawal of the territory of Transnistria from Moldova, swallowing the genocide committed by Russians in Chechnya, allowing the escape of domains from Georgia, the illegal annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, the occupation of part of the Ukrainian Donbas. Did it stop Russia? Did this stop Russia from the other all-out war against Ukraine and committing genocide against the Ukrainian people? No. Russia will not prevent the defeat in Ukraine from a new revenge war, which will spread to Europe with renewed vigor. Therefore, the whole world, the entire Western world, must realize that it is possible to stop a new war on a continental scale not only through the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine but with a change in the entire structure of power in Russia (and not only by its defeat in Ukraine or Putin's change), the absolute destruction of the model of its regime, the condemnation by an international tribunal of all persons involved in the power structures of the Russian Federation. The whole country and its ideology, changes in the form and structure of the state organization of the Russian Federation and its constitutional and socio-political system, as well as, at the same time, the transformation of the entire architecture of the world security system and the renewal of international relations and security safeguards on a qualitatively new basis, which dictates to the planet and the world community not only the present but also the future."

Prof. Yevhen Bystrytsky, PhD., Head of NGO "Election Council UA".



Why did Ukraine not give the Donbas republics autonomy by the Minsk agreements?

"First, there is not a single word about the republics in the Minsk agreements, not even about their names! In Ukraine, we are talking about the autonomy of communities within decentralization reform. The decentralization reform gave absolute independence to local authorities. Here are just a few examples, primarily: strengthening local self-government through the creation of territorial communities, a guarantee of the endowment of local self-government with sufficient powers and resources, and what I would like to stress now that law recognizes historical,

economic, environmental and cultural features in community development planning. The last point allowed local communities to provide quite a balanced language policy.

The decentralization reform was successfully implemented and, as our European partners recognized, it was based on European Union's values; still, Russia's aggression -- as it is clear -- interrupted the full achievement of its aims. What the European values is concerned, Ukraine committed itself to apply them year after year especially after the Euro-Maidan.

Second, the law on the specifics of the autonomy of these local communities of Ukraine, "On the special order of local self-government in certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions," also known as the Law on the special status of Donbas, was adopted by the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada) on September 16, 2014. This law was created within the framework of the Minsk agreements. It consisted of introducing a particular procedure of local self-government for a period of 3 years for certain districts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions - territories not controlled by Ukrainian forces as of the day the law was passed.

The law did not enter into force because Russia did not fulfill the first points of the Minsk agreements: (1) Immediate and comprehensive ceasefire; (2) Withdrawal of all heavy weapons on both sides at a distance level to create a security zone.

Honestly, the reasons for this question are not entirely clear to me. Ukraine was taking positive steps in its efforts to implement the Minsk agreements. Putin's attempts to justify his bloody war against Ukraine by saying that we did not comply with the Minsk agreements have been thoroughly refuted by the very fact of this aggression”.

Oleksandr Doniy, Head of the Center for Research on Political Values.



After the photo and video fixation with Bucha crimes , what was previously apparent and known to Ukrainian society became known as the "Collective West”.

“Ukraine as a state is grateful to all its allies who help to defend our country against Russian fascist aggression. No matter what kind of assistance it is: humanitarian, social, diplomatic, military.

At the same time, if we conduct a cursory analysis, we can state that the Allies' position is not one-dimensional and changes over time.

Our allies are "softer" and "firmer." Firmer allies include those who have a deeper understanding of the dangers of Russian aggression, such as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and the United Kingdom. Some allies obviously have more amazing illusions about Russia or a more substantial level of political or economic dependence on it.

For example, Estonia and Hungary are linguistically related countries from the Finno-Ugric language group. Nevertheless, a small-sized Estonia country that provides Ukraine with the most significant military assistance per capita, and Hungary (which is also our ally) does not allow the transportation of military cargo for Ukraine through its territory.

Support for Ukraine, as I have already noted, is changing over time. The situation on the eve of February 24, 2022 (the day of the full-scale invasion of Fascist Russia) can be interpreted as the consent of western countries to the occupation of part of Ukraine with Kyiv inclusive. This is how Western states' embassies moved from the Ukrainian capital to Lviv or abroad.

I think there will be times when this decision will be recognized as erroneous, harmful, and encouraging Putin's aggression.

The consent to the occupation by the West was rejected only due to three factors: the struggle of the Ukrainian people, the struggle of the Ukrainian Armed forces, and the struggle of the Ukrainian authorities against the Russian aggressor.

The next stage of the "collective West" action was the supply of small arms and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The "collective West" did not dare to supply Ukraine with heavier weapons in the first stage. For example, Germany was limited to the famous supply of helmets. There was a marked difference in support for Ukraine in Western societies and Western governments.

If the communities of Western countries massively supported Ukraine, the Western authorities were more cautious about such support. The situation changed radically after Bucha. Several small towns near Kyiv (Bucha, Irpin, Gostomel), which on March 31 were liberated from Russian fascists, turned out to be examples of sadism, mass murder, rape, and looting by the Russian army. After the photo and video fixation with Bucha crimes, what was previously apparent and known to Ukrainian society, became known as the "collective West."

After Bucha, the West began to supply Ukraine with no small arms but medium-sized weapons. Not yet state-of-the-art and not super-heavy, not yet aircraft, but at least artillery, and not just Stingers and Javelins, as before.

Ukraine continues to hold the blow. Day after day and week after week.

Russia is ready for a long war. Wars for years. Economic sanctions do not scare Putin and the Kremlin. The example of North Korea shows that under economic sanctions, authoritarian power can live for decades if it controls the population using propaganda and terror.

Russia can be overcome only militarily through military defeat. But for this, Ukraine's forces will not be enough, even if the "collective West" eventually begins to supply not only medium-average weapons but also heavy ones.

In a few months, I can predict a difficult discussion within Western elites at some stage. Our "softer" allies (including the Russian secret agents present in many Western elites) will pressure the Ukrainian authorities to sign an agreement with Russia with the partial surrender of Ukrainian national interests. "Firmer" allies will conclude that Russia, with its vast military potential and excellent human resources, cannot be overcome by some Ukrainian Armed forces. Accordingly, the necessary prerequisite for the victory over Russia is a direct strike of the details of the "collective West" on the Russian military infrastructure, stretching the front to the entire length of the Russian border. This is not an easy decision, and the discussion on this decision will not be easy.

After all, we don't know what decision the "collective West" will make. Only one thing is known: Russia did not just attack Ukraine. The so-called "Russian Peace" is a dangerous fascist concept. Not only is Ukraine under threat, but the entire civilized world is also under threat. To resist fascism, and the Russian measure, in particular, can only be by joint efforts. Joint efforts can only defeat Russian fascism.

The world must win. The light must overcome the darkness. The world must defeat Russia".