

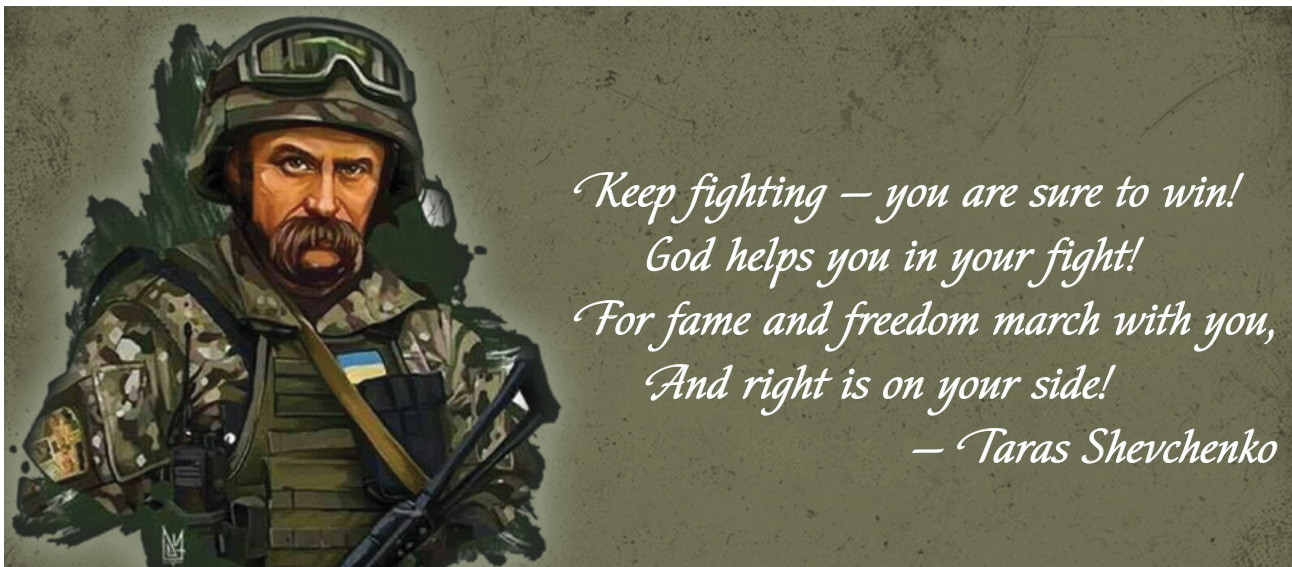


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SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Vitaliy Portnykov | Notes for February

THE THIRD YEAR OF THE WAR



When the great Russian invasion of Ukraine began, those who talked about the possibility of a long war were treated with almost the same distrust as before the attack those who warned of its inevitability. It seemed that a long war in Europe was simply impossible in our time – even though intense hostilities had already become a reality.

Now, at the beginning of the third year of the war, we can state that no one has any idea when it might end, and many politicians and observers in their reasoning almost “do not notice” 2024, but immediately talk about 2025. At the same time, we can state that during these two years Putin has failed to achieve not only the strategic, but also the tactical goals he set for his troops in February 2022.

Russia attempted to occupy most of the territory of the Ukrainian state and to turn Ukraine into a puppet state, which, together with other former Soviet republics, would later become part of a new Russian Empire under the leadership of Vladimir Putin. All the documents, some of which have been leaked to the media, showed that Putin planned to complete this “integration” process in 2030. But now it’s 2024, and Russia is literally at war with Ukraine and in confrontation with the civilized world.

At the same time, Ukrainian hopes for the second year of the war have not been realized. The front line has remained static, although Ukraine has made significant progress in naval warfare and has even secured corridors for the transportation of its grain along the Black Sea routes. However, most of Ukraine’s territory remains occupied by the enemy, and the Russian economy has managed to withstand the sanctions of the civilized world and continue its course of militarization and rapprochement, primarily with China.

Of course, now it is important to understand what the third year of the war will look like. But the course of events will depend primarily on the willingness of the Ukrainians to continue to resist Russian aggression and on the willingness of the West to help Ukraine.

The day after the next anniversary of the attack, French President Emmanuel Macron gathered the leaders of the civilized world in Paris to discuss in private how to effectively help Ukraine resist Russian aggression. The very fact that this important meeting took place in Paris, and not in Washington, indicates a completely new situation with this aid. The decision to allocate money for Ukraine, as requested by President Joe Biden, is literally “stuck” in the House of Representatives, and it is still unclear whether it will be possible to bring it to a vote or find a new compromise. In this situation, European leaders have an important role to play in finding new ways to help.

The assessment of danger by the Europeans themselves has also changed. If in 2022 Russia’s attack on Ukraine was seen primarily as a local conflict, now more and more Western politicians and observers are talking about the possibility that Russia will be able to attack NATO countries in a few years. President Macron also said at the opening of the meeting in Paris that Russia could attack other countries in a few years. So today assistance to Ukraine looks not just like exclusively supporting Kyiv in our confrontation with Russian aggression, but also trying to avert trouble from Europe itself, which changes the situation significantly.

At the same time, we have to admit that not only Ukraine, but also the West was not ready for such a big and long war. To tell the truth, Russia was not even preparing for war so much as it had the opportunity, at least in the first years, to use the entire arsenal that was left to it as a legacy from the Soviet Union – and now the reformation of the Russian economy is taking place, its transition to military rails at the cost of a significant reduction in the state’s social capabilities. But Russian society is calm about this because it is used to living in a belt-tightening mode, and Putin spares no expense for those who want to fight.

And the West needs to return to arms production right now, which is why it is constantly looking for weapons in third countries. Obviously, the West did not expect to find itself once again in a fierce confrontation with a totalitarian regime. And by the way, the fact that Russia demonstratively killed the opposition leader Alexei Navalny just before the second anniversary of the attack should also demonstrate to the West how much Putin ignores the assessments of the civilized world today and how far he is willing to go just to demonstrate his impunity.

Therefore, it was not for nothing that after Navalny’s death became known, many Western politicians said that the best way to respond to this crime was to help Ukraine. After all, it is Ukraine’s victory that can create the conditions for the degradation and collapse of the Putin regime. In Ukraine they like to say that the war can prevent the collapse of the Putin regime, but in my opinion there is rather an inverse relationship – Putin’s inability to win in Ukraine can pose a threat to his power in the future. And that is why the Russian leader needs this war so badly.

Another important area for the future is cooperation with the countries of the Global South. We habitually say that the world supports Ukraine, but most of the countries of the global South have maintained good relations with Russia and, most importantly, have ensured its economic survival after the imposition of Western sanctions. Reducing Russia’s economic capacity and its ability to evade sanctions will be an important key to ending the war.

And, of course, much depends on the state of Ukrainian society itself. Many Western observers today say that in the darkest months of the war, the state of Ukrainian society was much more optimistic than it is now, when the front line has been stabilized and shelling is taking place at significant intervals in most of the country. But at the same time we must realize that war fatigue is a common human trait; people cannot live forever in a state of stress and constant expectation. And if Ukrainians want to survive their enemy, they will have to go through not only the years of war, but also the years of depression and dis-

appointment. And this, of course, will be related to how effectively the state will function and the level of trust in its institutions. At the moment, the armed forces enjoy the greatest trust, and the resignation of the commander-in-chief Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, according to sociology, was not supported by the vast majority of Ukrainians – we

can say that this is the first time in recent years that the decisions of the president (not personally Volodymyr Zelenskyy, but the president of Ukraine as such) have been so different from the expectations of society. And we can only hope that Zelenskyy will be able to draw conclusions from this and realize that national unity and trust

are the invaluable capital on which we must rely when we talk about survival and victory in this difficult war. Moreover, there are many difficult tests ahead, because the enemy does not rest, and Ukraine's survival depends only on our solidarity – in Ukraine, in the Diaspora, and in the solidarity of all our friends abroad.



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SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Oles Doniy

STEPAN KHMARA

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES FOR UKRAINE



Last month there were many significant events that deserve attention and separate analysis. I could have dedicated this article to the second anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by fascist Russia, I could have considered the replacement of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces Valeriy Zaluzhny with Oleksandr Syrsky, analyzed Tucker Carlson's interview with the Russian tyrant Putin, and analyzed the consequences of the torture of the leader of the Russian opposition, Alexei Navalny, in a Russian prison.

But I chose to focus on the figure of Stepan Khmara, who died of cancer on February 21st at the age of 86. Using the example of this politician, who was unlike any other, I will try to show several episodes in which Ukraine took a wrong turn that later, years and decades later, made Russian military aggression possible.

Throughout his political life, Stepan Khmara was characterized by radicalism in his views and actions. Tracked down by the KGB in 1980, accused of "anti-Soviet propaganda" and sentenced to 7 years in prison and 5 years in exile, he not only did not break down, but on the contrary continued his struggle there with numerous hunger strikes and protests, which led to repeated imprisonment. The issue of Ukrainian Bulletin «Ukrainsky Visnyk» published by Khmara with his article "Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the USSR" was more radical than all the issues of the magazine published by its founder and main ideologue, Vyacheslav Chornovil. It was not for nothing that Khmara did not like the word "dissident," at least in relation to himself. He insisted that he personally was a

"political prisoner. Because even in the conditions of the underground struggle he tried to create an independent Ukrainian politics.

In the following I will recall three cases from the history of Ukraine, which became wasted opportunities for him. And in all three cases Stepan Khmara took a position "against the stream", a position that was not respected in time.

At the time of the first competitive elections to the Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) of Ukraine in 1990, dissidents and political prisoners had the opportunity to influence the entire nation of 50 million, not just the limited audience of political self-publishing. About two-thirds of the newly elected Verkhovna Rada were Communists, and one-fourth were members of the opposition People's Council «Narodna Pada». Although the opposition was a minority, it had a decisive influence on the highest legislative body, for example, by jointly adopting the Declaration of Sovereignty on July 16, 1990. Nevertheless, we, the leadership of the student movement at that time (I was the head of the Ukrainian Student Union in Kyiv at that time), were not satisfied with the slowness in achieving independence and ousting the communists from power, and we started the first Maidan in October 1990, which was later called the "Student Revolution on Granite". Formally, we were supported by the entire opposition-the People's Movement of Ukraine, the People's Council, and so on. But few people know that we actually scared the leadership of the opposition at the time. Our very first demand, "Re-election of the Verkhovna Rada on a multi-party basis," meant that not only would the leaders of the communist nomenclature lose their seats, but opposition deputies would also have to be re-elected. Stepan Khmara organized a group of like-minded people, and these 12 people came to our camp to hunger strike and sit in tents with the students. Khmara understood the need to change the government, while the rest of the "opposition" did not. The "Student Revolution on Granite" was not only the greatest victory of the resistance mo-

vement on the road to independence in the late 80s and early 90s, but also the greatest missed opportunity. Vyacheslav Chornovil realized the necessity of re-electing the Verkhovna Rada only two years later, when it was already too late: the communist nomenclature, after Leonid Kravchuk's victory in the presidential elections, changed the flags on their lapels to blue and yellow and successfully continued their own rule. It is often said that Ukraine took a wrong turn when it chose Kravchuk over Chornovil in the presidential elections of December 1, 1991. This is not true; we did not have enough votes in the presidential election, Kravchuk was a popular figure. But in the likely elections to the Verkhovna Rada, the Communists did not have 450 "Kravchuks" who were as cunning, flexible and intelligent. The opposition had every chance of winning a majority in the Verkhovna Rada. This way would have led to the path chosen by the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic states. Thus, Ukraine, which in 1991 removed the communist nomenclature from power, along with other Central European countries, would have already joined the EU and NATO, which means that no fascist Russia would have dared to attack us. Stepan Khmara was the only one of the important figures of the older generation in 1990 who understood this. And the first blow to the resolution of the Verkhovna Rada, which was adopted under our student pressure and which set the algorithm for early elections, was not even struck by the Communists, but by Volodymyr Yavorivsky, one of the leaders of the People's Council and the People's Movement, who publicly announced a month after the student revolution that the students had gone too far with the re-elections.

The second chance that Ukraine missed was the Russian Black Sea Fleet, which Ukraine, in the person of both President Kravchuk and President Kuchma, allowed to be based on its territory. Khmara protested, Khmara warned that armed Russians should not be allowed on its territory, Khmara insisted that the Black Sea



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Fleet either become Ukrainian or be expelled, and that immediately. As a result, Ukraine received an enemy detachment on its soil, which carried out its insidious occupation mission in 2014. And Khmara saw this coming.

The third chance lost by Ukraine is related to the so-called "Budapest Memorandum" of 1994, or rather the renunciation of nuclear weapons. Khmara was more radical in his position than we, the young, and now we can say that he was a prophet. If our position then was limited to the understanding that we should not give Russia tactical nuclear weapons, Khmara argued that we should not even give away strategic weapons. When it was pointed out that the infamous "red button" for them was still physically located in Moscow, he replied that we should have specialists reprogram it, that there were no

unsolvable mysteries in electronics. Obviously, his time in Russian prisons and camps had an effect here – unlike everyone else, Khmara understood that Russia could not be trusted under any circumstances. But he was almost alone again, and the ruling nomenclature succumbed to pressure from Russia, the United States, and Great Britain. We don't know what kind of pressure it was – political, outright bribery, the use of agents, or something else. But all these means did not work on Stepan Khmara – neither pressure nor bribery attempts, and fortunately, unlike many "oppositionists", there is no doubt about his purity in relation to the special services.

If today Ukraine had nuclear weapons, fascist Russia would not have dared to attack it. But few people, except Khmara, realized this.

Stepan Khmara was had a difficult personality, sharp, prickly, but at the same time sincere and principled. And we are coming to understand the most important of the missed opportunities for Ukraine: we did not have sincere and principled people at the highest levels of power. We had anything but honest and principled people. No wonder that Stepan Khmara was an opponent of all six presidents of Ukraine.

Therefore, we would like to express our sincere respect to Stepan Ilkovych, because he deserves it with his life. And for us it is an important lesson: will Ukraine ever be able to elect sincere and principled people to its top leadership? We don't want to spend the rest of our lives watching missed opportunities.

SPECIAL FOR HROMADA

Katerina Manoff | Ukrainian Roots, American Branches

WHEN MEDITATION DOESN'T WORK: SEARCHING FOR A STRESS RELIEF SUPERWEAPON



After two years of war, Ukrainians could teach a masterclass on stress reduction techniques. We've learned about meditation and deep breathing; about journaling, time in nature, and therapy; about yoga and running and exercise of all kinds.

Coincidentally, mental health is a major issue in the US as well. America isn't a war zone, but rising crime, mass shootings, broken political/healthcare/education systems, addictive technologies, and soaring levels of inequality have left their mark. No wonder that rising stress levels have been front and center of the national conversation for the better part of a decade.

Health and wellness has ballooned a multibillion dollar industry – and stress reduction is a significant piece of this field. Kids learn it in school, our social media newsfeeds are full of mental health advice, and influencers build empires on the promise of helping us learn to manage our stressors.

And yet, sometimes, though we're swimming in tips and techniques, life still feels like too much. Why does this happen – and can we do anything about it?

To start with the obvious, even the best stress relief strategies in the world won't help if you don't use them. Starting a meditation practice or daily walks around the neighborhood may sound simple in theory, but building new habits is hard – especially when we're already overwhelmed.

In my case, running my nonprofit and raising my kids keep my plate filled to the brim. I barely have time to get

dinner on the table every night. Sometimes I struggle to find 2 minutes for a bathroom break. So, it's no wonder that, historically, my attempts to adopt healthy habits haven't stuck.

2024, though, was different. I resolved to actually make changes this year – to prioritize my health and wrest back control over my stress. I wanted to start leading my life again, instead of having my life lead me.

And I changed – I honestly did! I breathed and meditated, and wrote in a beautiful Ukrainian journal I'd bought myself for St. Mykolai. I forced myself to get outside and found an intense Ukrainian trainer named Dima, who terrorizes me over Zoom twice a week.

At first, it all seemed to help. I started sleeping better, had more energy, and felt full of optimism. Like a racecar driver in a video game, I dodged and sped through life's obstacles, overcoming setbacks at work and home.

But then, things started to unravel. My husband fell ill with COVID and spent over a week isolated in his room. I had to take over the full load at home and with my girls, which meant that I fell further and further behind at work. Tasks piled up. People were upset. Being a CEO means you are juggling all the balls, and if you let one drop, someone gets hurt.

One of my most dedicated volunteers quit after a misunderstanding – my apologies and explanations weren't enough to convince her. I was rejected by several major potential partners, one after the other. I had a conflict with a key member of my organization's leadership team.

At the same time, the news went from bleak to bleaker. Zaluzhnyi was gone, Avdiivka lost, aid to Ukraine held up indefinitely, and Putin transformed into the new hero of the political right.

I was doing my exercise and journaling and yoga – but they had stopped working. Or rather, my hopelessness and despair had grown so intense that they were no match for these standard

interventions.

In particularly difficult times, we need a particularly powerful strategy – a superweapon for stress. And this weapon isn't something exotic or expensive: it's human connection.

In the first months after the full-scale invasion, which had turned me into a shell-shocked shadow of myself, I clearly remember the moments when I began to feel human again. A phone call with Julia as Mariupol bled. An evening on Yana's couch to talk about the war and then about anything but the war. A conversation with another Ukrainian mom whose name I don't even remember because we'd never met before or since – but with whom I spoke for hours as if we'd known each other forever.

Unfortunately, emotional connection is harder to find than a journal or a meditation app. It's even harder than my punishing workouts with Dima. Today, so many of us feel so alone. In America, loneliness is an epidemic – a literal public health crisis.

Even having a spouse, colleagues, and friends does not guarantee connection. Because it's not enough to simply interact with others – what heals us is specifically the experience of being understood. The experience of unzipping our protective shield and showing our soul to another human being, and hearing that person say, "I see you. I get it. I care about you."

This kind of vulnerability is scary. You can never be sure how others will react. Will they see you, or will they brush off your feelings? Will they hold you or ridicule you, or, worst of all, simply turn away? Worse yet, what will **you** see when you unzip that shield? Will you be able to handle your own darkness?

And yet.

When you reach out and someone responds, the payoff is incredible. Human connection can make miracles. It protects us from pain, it reduces stress, it allows us to begin recovering from the deepest grief.

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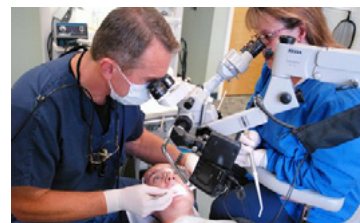
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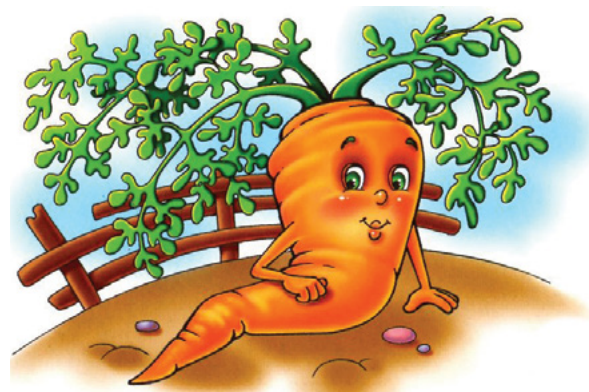
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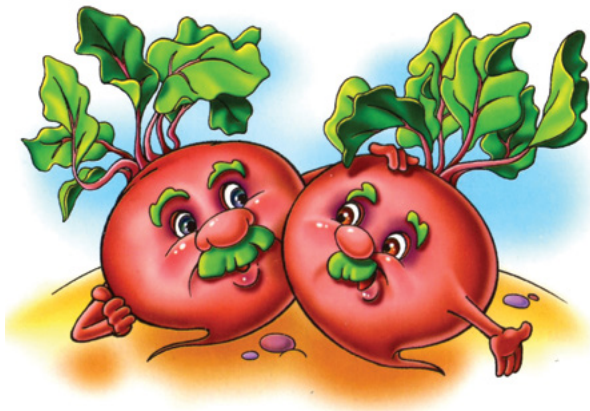
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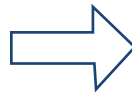
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CALL YOUR CONGRESSMAN. SUPPORT UKRAINE

Lukian Selskyi

With this message on February 25, Tiburon (California) took place a panel discussion organized jointly by local American and Ukrainian communities. The answer to the question is how a common US citizen can help Ukraine if many questions are overly politicized and delayed at the level of Congress – it has been quite simple and effective. Anyone can call the local representative to Congress and insist on continuous assistance to Ukraine during the great struggle for independence, the existence of the state itself, as well as the unexpected threats to the entire civilized world.

The event "Ukraine: Resilience and Struggle for Freedom – two years and the countdown continues ..." was dedicated to the date when Russian troops appeared in the Ukrainian lands and began a brutal and bloody war against our people. The panel discussion was attended by Dmitry Kushneruk – the Consul General of Ukraine in San Francisco, Natalia Goshylik – a teacher of Slavic languages at the University of Berkeley, and Rostislav Salva – a Ukrainian teenager who lived and studied in Ukraine at a full-scale invasion. The event was moderated by Natalia Anon – co-founder of NGO "Hromada".

"This memory is fresh, as if it were yesterday. The father called and said that the bombing had begun. I didn't believe it, but the sounds of remote explosions in the phone confirmed that he was telling the truth. However, today we can say that we have gone a great way to fight for freedom. Today, one of you can feel pessimistic, confused, but I would like to remind you that the US government has publicly voted that Ukraine would win this war. Americans believe in it. And we believe in it," the Consul General of Ukraine in San Francisco Dmitry Kushneruk shares his thoughts. The diplomat is convinced that joint coordinated actions and belief in victory are the key to approaching Russian defeat.

"If someone thought that to give some territories of Ukraine, thus ending the war is a way out, then he is wrong. Today there is an existential war for the destruction of the whole Ukrainian people. Russia will not stop until it destroys our entire state. There is a lot of evidence for both fresh and historical



ones that reach the beginning and mid-20th century. Today, the whole world, and especially the Ukrainians, is aware that Russia does not plan to stop," – said the associated professor Berkeley Natalia Goshylik, explaining that

Putin's Russia needs to be stopped as Hitler stopped the whole world.

History shows that today a successful opposition of the enemy requires strong cohesion within the United States. Natalia Anon is convinced that

every American can help. It is enough to call your congressmen and senators and demand Ukraine support. "The United States is the leader of the free world with all the necessary tools to stop this war. And it (war) can really end in the near future if there is a strong political will within the US," Ms. Anon comments on numerous questions from Tiburon's inhabitants about

how best to support Ukrainians.

The Westminster Presbyterian Church, which initiated a meeting with the Ukrainians, honored the memory of fallen Ukrainians with a moment of silence. Americans share: they sincerely sympathize with and cheer for Ukraine, and lately are even more interested in the history and culture of our country. Now they have another

desire to persuade the authorities to consolidate more efforts to victory over the enemy.

Meanwhile, the NGO "Hromada" plans systematic activities that bring people around a common goal in the discussion – the approach of Ukraine's victory.



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THE 2ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR: Ukrainians in San Francisco Call for Help for Ukraine

Myroslav Hrehk

Two years of brutal war. Two years of suffering, death, blood, ruins, hundreds of thousands of victims, millions of refugees. This is what the racist evil spirits, the cursed "Russian world" brought to the Ukrainian land. The people of Ukraine rallied, gave a worthy rebuff to the invaders and continues the grueling fight for freedom and independence. The Ukrainian Armed Forces have demonstrated their strength and steadfastness.

The Ukrainian diaspora in San Francisco marked the second anniversary of the war with several events that I would like to share with our readers.

On February 24, a car rally was held in the city, in which a representative of the non-profit organization Hromada, Yarema Kuzyshyn, took an active part. According to him, the rally started at 12 noon from the City Hall and went through the streets with flags, slogans, loudspeakers, drawing the attention of the residents to this date. It ended with a rally at the Ferry Building. The rally was attended by California State Senator Scott Wiener and 7 representatives of local Ukrainian non-profit organizations. The main points of the speeches were: continuation of active military, financial, and humanitarian support for Ukraine; a clear demand that Congress vote to provide financial assistance to Ukraine; further strengthening of sanctions against Russia.

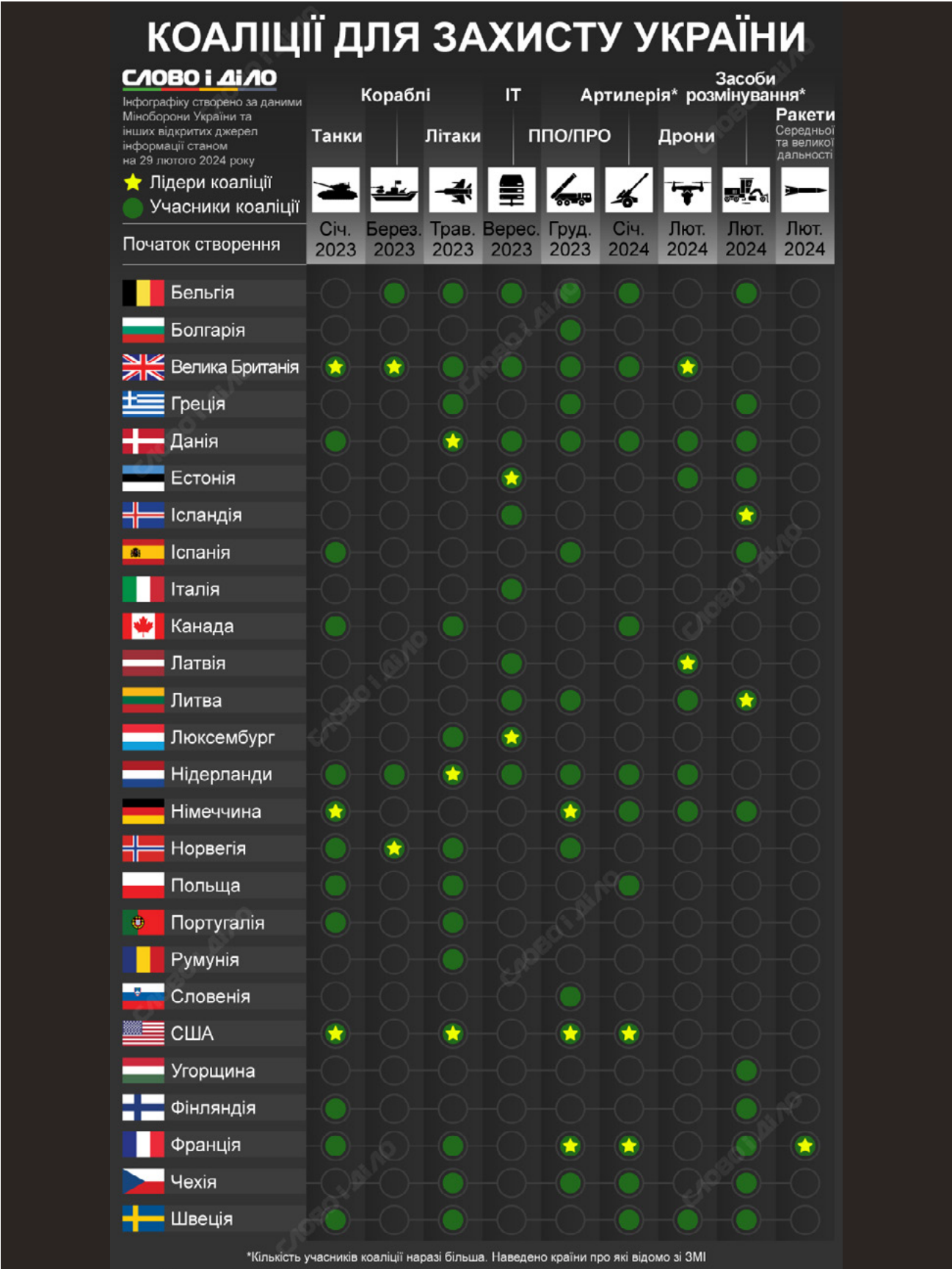
On February 25 at 3 p.m. a meeting of representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora with the community of residents of the region called "We" was held in the Tiboron Presbyterian Church. This platform was attended by Dmytro Kushneruk, Consul General of Ukraine in San Francisco, Natalia Goshlyk, lecturer of Slavic languages at UC Berkeley, and Rostyslav Salva, student at Marin College. The meeting was moderated by Natalia Anon, co-founder of the Hromada and Anelyk Foundation. You can read more about this platform in this issue of the newspaper.

On February 26, at 5:00 p.m., a screening of the feature film "Bucha" took place in the premises of the Consulate General of Ukraine in San Francisco, written and produced by Oleksandr Shchur. Before the screening,



Consul General Dmytro Kushneruk gave introductory remarks. Then the film was shown with the participation of Ukrainian actors and one actor from Poland. The film shows the first months of the war, the battles in Kyiv and the surrounding area, Bucha, and tells how Konstantin, an emigrant from

Kazakhstan, took 200 people out of occupied Bucha and the surrounding villages in his car. The film is interesting and emotional. After the screening, Oleksandr Shchur answered questions from the audience. Read more about the film and its screening in our next issue.



UKRAINIAN NEWS

Total enemy combat losses



According to the General Staff, the total combat losses of the enemy from February 24, 2022 to February 29, 2024 are approximately as follows:

Personnel – about 413,760 people were eliminated,
Tanks – 6,593 units,
Armored personnel carriers – 12,552 units,
Artillery systems – 10,070 units,
MLRS – 1,000 units,
Air defense systems – 690 units,
Aircraft – 342 units,
Helicopters - 325 units,
Operational and tactical level UAVs – 7,768 units,
Cruise missiles – 1,912 units,
Ships and boats - 25 units,
Submarines – 1 unit,
Vehicles and tankers – 13,152 units,
Special equipment – 1,601 units.

Military aid for Ukraine



- Denmark:

Danish Prime Minister Mette Fredriksen announced that Denmark will transfer all its artillery to Ukraine.

"We, Denmark, have decided to transfer all our artillery to Ukraine. We have weapons, ammunition, air defense systems that we do not use yet. So

I'm sorry, but it's not just about production. Europe still has military hardware. It must be transferred to Ukraine," she said.

Mette Fredriksen also noted that Europeans should not wait until the crisis is resolved to approve the financing of supplies from the United States for the armed forces.

"Europe must defend itself, because this is a war on our continent," she reminded.

- Germany:

German authorities handed over a new batch of weapons to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The aid package includes armored personnel carriers and drones.

The information appeared on the website of the German government on Friday, February 16.

Thus, the armed forces received 18 armored personnel carriers (the type of vehicles is not specified), 10 Vector drones, 30 RQ-35 Heidrun drones, 11 Primoco ONE UAVs and 7 Songbird UAVs.

In addition, Germany supplied:

- 3 mine-resistant vehicles;
- 1 Dachs engineering tank;
- 9 mine sweepers;
- 4 border guard vehicles;
- 3,990 155 mm caliber grenades;
- 500 flashlights and other equipment.

On February 16, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz also announced a new package of military aid to Ukraine worth 1.1 billion euros. In particular, it will include new air defense systems.

He made the announcement at a briefing with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Zelenskyy at a briefing with President Zelenskyy. According to Scholz, the new package will include

- 36 armored and wheeled howitzers from industrial stocks;
- 120 thousand grenades;
- 2 Skynex air defense systems;
- missiles for IRIS-T.

- The Netherlands:

Dutch Defense Minister Kaysa Ollongren said that Amsterdam, which recently joined the drone coalition, is already transferring an undisclosed number of drones to Ukraine.

She also recalled that the Netherlands is also actively involved in the air defense coalition for Ukraine, for example with Patriot systems, as well as F-16s, which are also in the process.

- Bulgaria:

Bulgaria has already started sending 100 armored personnel carriers to Ukraine, which were approved by the parliament.

It is not yet known when all 100 APCs will be delivered.

- Lithuania:

Earlier this month, the Lithuanian government delivered another batch of military aid to the Ukrainian armed forces.

The Defense Forces received "thousands of rounds of ammunition" for Carl Gustav anti-tank grenade launchers and the RISE-1 remote detonation system.

On February 9, a new military aid package from the Lithuanian Ministry of Defense arrived in Ukraine.

The new package includes equipment needed for the winter season and tens of thousands of sets of warm clothing for Ukrainian soldiers.

- Estonia:

Estonia has delivered a new military assistance package to Ukraine, including Javelin anti-tank missiles, machine guns and small arms ammunition.

In particular, Ukraine received Javelin missiles, which the country purchased in December, as well as machine guns, small arms ammunition, land and water vehicles, and diving equipment.

Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur emphasized that Estonia will continue to support Ukraine until a victorious end.

- Moldova:

Moldova will provide Ukraine with a new batch of humanitarian aid worth more than 250 thousand euros.

It is noted that Ukraine will receive 19 power stations, blood transfusion equipment, about 80 thousand protective masks, hand sanitizers and more than 50 thousand canned pork and fish. The total cost of the aid is estimated at 4.9 million lei, which is more than 250 thousand euros.

Financial assistance for Ukraine



- Since February 2022, **Japan** has provided \$4.6 billion to Ukraine through World Bank projects and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The agency notes that in the face of full-scale Russian aggression, Japan is one of the leaders in supporting

Ukraine in all possible ways.

On February 16, the Ukrainian budget received part of a \$49.4 million grant from the Japanese government as part of the World Bank's Housing repair to restore people's rights and opportunities Project.

This was reported by the press service of the Ministry of Finance.

"The funds are aimed at overcoming the consequences of Russia's armed aggression and rebuilding Ukraine's housing infrastructure. I am grateful to the teams of the Government of Japan and the World Bank for their support," said Minister of Finance Sergiy Marchenko.

- The German development bank has transferred more than 1.4 billion euros to support Ukraine.

It is known that 520 million euros of this amount has been allocated to the energy sector, as power lines, substations and power plants are in constant need of repair due to attacks by Russia. More than 530 million euros will be spent on housing programs and social services for internally displaced persons and host communities.

These funds will also be used to strengthen basic municipal infrastructure. In particular, approximately 135 million euros will be used to repair and modernize medical centers, schools and drinking water supply systems.

- The Swedish government has decided to provide Ukraine with an additional financial assistance package.

As part of the financial assistance package, Ukraine will receive 26.4 million euros. The funds will be distributed among Ukrainian municipalities to support energy efficiency projects.

- The European Commission has approved a €75 million funding package for various humanitarian projects in Ukraine.

The funds will be used for programs to provide shelter, protection services, clean water, education and health care to Ukrainians affected by a full-scale invasion by Russia.

- EU leaders agreed at a European Council meeting on Feb. 1 to provide a €50 billion aid package to Ukraine, its president, Charles Michel, said.

"All 27 leaders have agreed on an additional €50 billion package of support for Ukraine within the EU budget. This will provide permanent, long-term and predictable funding for Ukraine," Michel said.

The program is for four years.

- And on February 27, the **European Parliament** voted in favor of 50 billion euros in aid for Ukraine and allocated the funds.

Drones for the Military: Strengthening Ukraine's Defense



- The Drone Coalition was officially launched as part of the work of the Contact Group on Ukraine's Defense.

On February 17, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov signed a letter thanking the leaders of the coalition.

It should be noted that Latvia, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Estonia and the Netherlands have already joined the coalition.

The letter emphasizes that membership is open to other interested countries.

On February 20, Dutch Defense Minister Keesa Ollongren said that Amsterdam, which recently joined the drone coalition, was already sending drones to Ukraine.

"I can't tell you the exact number, but we are already transferring drones to Ukraine. The drone coalition is very important because now we are going to join forces, which means that we will be able to increase the number of drones according to Ukraine's needs," Ollongren said.

She also recalled that the Netherlands is an active participant in the air defense coalition for Ukraine.

- NATO countries will provide Ukraine with one million drones – Stoltenberg.

"A group of allies will join forces and provide Ukraine with one million drones, and 20 NATO allies have also agreed to create a coalition for demining. All of this will help save the lives of Ukrainians," he stressed.

Stoltenberg added that in recent months NATO has signed defense contracts worth a total of \$10 billion. The weapons produced under these agreements will be transferred to Ukraine.

- President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signs a decree creating a separate type of troops for drones – the Unmanned Systems Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

It is stated that the new type of for-

ce will be created to increase the capabilities of the Armed Forces in the use of unmanned and robotic air, sea and ground systems and to ensure readiness to use such systems.

- Canada plans to provide Ukraine with more than 800 SkyRanger R70 multirole unmanned aerial systems as part of an additional assistance package.

The cost of the drones will be approximately \$95 million. The aid will be paid from the \$500 million package that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau provided to Ukraine during his visit to Kyiv last June.

- Ukrainian counterparts of the Lancet drones have passed preliminary tests and are already preparing for their first combat tests.

Deputy Prime Minister for Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov made the announcement on the Diia YouTube channel.

Fedorov noted that in the next few months it will be possible to organize the production of about 100 such drones per month.

According to him, the Lancet allows to increase the range of the equipment, it works at 30-40 km, while FPV drones work at 10-20 km. Another advantage of the Lancet drone is that it can operate during the day, while large quadcopters can operate only under cover of night.

In addition, such drones have a target acquisition function that allows them to aim at a target in the last 300-500 meters before hitting it without direct communication with the drone.

Ukraine's New Military Leadership

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has made the biggest reshuffle of Ukraine's military leadership since the start of the full-scale war.

General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi was officially dismissed from the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

The decree to this effect appeared on the president's website on the evening of February 8.

In two other decrees, Zelenskyy dismissed Oleksandr Syrskyi from the post of Land Forces Commander and appointed him as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Zelenskyy also appointed a new chief of the General Staff and the commanders of the Land Forces, Joint Forces, Air Assault Forces, and Territorial Defense Forces.

КАДРОВІ ЗМІНИ У ВІЙСЬКОВОМУ КОМАНДУВАННІ УКРАЇНИ

Інфографіку створено за даними Указів Президента України станом на 12 лютого 2024 року

Перелік нагород не є вичерпним

СЛОВО І ДІЛО

Звільнені	Головнокомандувач ЗСУ	Призначені
Валерій Залужний Генерал 2024 2022 2016	Олександр Сирський Генерал-полковник 3 лютого 2024 2022 2022 2022 2022 2015	
	Начальник Генштабу ЗСУ	
Сергій Шаптала Генерал-лейтенант 2015 2015	Анатолій Баргилевич Генерал-майор 3 лютого 2024 2022 2022 2016	
	Командувач Об'єднаних сил ЗСУ	
Сергій Наєв Генерал-лейтенант 2022 2019	Юрій Содоль Генерал-лейтенант 3 лютого 2024 2022 2015	
	Командувач Сухопутних військ ЗСУ	
Олександр Сирський Генерал-полковник 2022 2022 2022 2022 2015	Олександр Павлюк Генерал-лейтенант 3 лютого 2024 2022 2016 2012	
	Командувач ДШВ ЗСУ	
Максим Миргородський Генерал-майор 2015 2014 2014	Ігор Скибюк Бригадний генерал 3 лютого 2024 2022 2022 2022	
	Командувач Сил ТрО ЗСУ	
Анатолій Баргилевич Генерал-майор 2022 2022 2016	Ігор Плахута Генерал-майор 3 лютого 2024 2006	
 Герой України	 Хрест бойових заслуг	 Орден Данила Галицького
	 І ст.	 І ст.
	 ІІ ст.	 ІІ ст.
	 ІІІ ст.	 ІІІ ст.
	 Орден Богдана Хмельницького	

БУДИНКИ - ДУПЛЕКСИ **ЗЕМЕЛЬНІ ДІЛЯНКИ** HOUSES - DUPLEXES **PLOTS OF LAND** Сакраменто та околиці • Sacramento and area

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- Інформація про пільги при купівлі першого будинку / Information about benefits when buying a first home
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PUBLIC EXECUTION OF CULTURE:

Russia Wages Barbaric War Against Ukrainian Cultural Identity

Inna Mikhno

For the past 10 years, the Russian Federation has been carrying out not only physical genocide, but also a deliberate policy of destroying cultural identity, erasing every manifestation of anything Ukrainian. The lists of lost, damaged or completely destroyed cultural heritage sites are simply staggering in number. Since February 24, 2022 alone, about 2,000 cultural infrastructure facilities have been damaged, and about 600 have been completely destroyed. These include about 600 libraries, more than 20 theaters, philharmonic societies, up to 90 museums and galleries, more than 300 churches, synagogues, and almost every cultural center in the settlement.

"Hromada spoke with Ihor Poshyvaylo, director general of the National Memorial Complex of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes – Museum of the Revolution of Dignity and co-founder of the Heritage Rescue Institute (HERI). These organizations are currently working to document cultural crimes, assess losses and damage, conduct rescue operations, protect museum collections, and collect artifacts for further museumization and memorialization of the war.

Losses of Ukrainian culture

In the interview, Ihor Poshyvaylo said that a very large number of cultural heritage sites in the country were destroyed due to the outbreak of hostilities. However, there are also cases of deliberate destruction. The facts of theft and destruction of museum collections are almost 100% proven.

"At the beginning of the full-scale invasion and occupation of the Kyiv region, a museum in the village of Ivankiv was burned down, where a collection of works by folk artists in the genre of 'naive art' was kept. In particular, Maria Pryimachenko and Hanna Sobachko-Shostak, who are fundamental representatives of our cultural identity. Thanks to the monitoring of satellite systems, foreign partners proved the crime of deliberate destruction of the National Literary and Memorial Museum of H.S. Skovoroda in the village of Skovorodynivka, Kharkiv region. The Shukhevych Memorial Museum in Lviv is on the same list," says Poshyvaylo.

But, as the museum director notes,



the most painful problem is not even the destruction of cultural monuments due to military or deliberate actions of the Russians, but the theft of Ukrainian valuables and unique exhibits from museum archives, libraries, and even private collections.

"One such example is the Scythian gold that was stored in the Melitopol Museum of Local History. Another is the destroyed gallery of Arkhyt Kuindzhi in the Mariupol Art Museum. The list is enormous, but the most illustrative facts of looting are in Kherson: the museums of art and local history, where the losses are enormous – more than 10,000 objects were stolen. The entire collection on display was completely stolen and taken to territories not controlled by Ukraine. In particular, part of the collection of the Kherson Regional Art Museum named after Oleksiy Shovkunenko (the museum's permanent exhibition included iconography of the 17th and early 20th centuries, Ukrainian art of the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries) were identified on the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea – in the Simferopol Central Museum of Tavri-da," says Poshyvaylo.

Have fear of God

During the expeditions of the museum and the headquarters were recorded the facts of disrespect not only to history, traditions, but also to religion. For example, in the village of Vyazivka, one of the oldest wooden churches in Ukraine, built in 1862, was destroyed by Russian shelling from the northern side of Belarus.

"The Rashists set up military depots and headquarters not only in schools and kindergartens, but also in churches. In particular, a twentieth-century church in the village of Lukashivka near Chernihiv burned almost completely from the inside. The Russians occupied this church, of which literally only two pieces of frescoes depicting saints remained, and the rest of the interior was lost. In the same church the Russians terrorized and brutally interrogated the local population, which was aggravated by the threat of occupation of Chernihiv itself. People hoped that it would be safer in the neighboring villages... There are many missing people, and in the same church the Russians shot people. After the liberation we also visited Mala Komyshevasa, near Izyum. According to the locals, the Russians were looking for a strong building in the village, and when they saw a church, a beautiful stone church on a hill, they turned the tank around and shot at the dome to test its strength. The church survived, only a huge hole in the dome remained, through which water seeped and destroyed the interior of the church from the inside. And at the church, the Russians set up an improvised hospital, used church furniture as operating tables, and dug a huge network of trenches around the church," Poshyvaylo recalls the villagers' testimony.

According to him, when recording the testimonies of villagers and residents of small communities, they were most shocked by the destruction of

cultural centers, museums, churches, especially historical buildings that "survived" two world wars but fell under the assault of another Russian repression. And they agreed that the Russians, in terms of their rage and destructive power, surpassed the fascist Nazis, who, despite their war crimes, did not commit mass destruction of such cultural sites.

"This all speaks to the level of barbarism of the Russians. This is a surreal and post-apocalyptic picture of the struggle between good and evil, represented by the wild world of the Moscow horde, which is trying to destroy the civilized, and I want to emphasize, hard working Ukrainian world. And this is hatred for Ukrainians in whole, for the standard of living of Ukrainians, because racists are surprised by washing machines, asphalt roads, street lighting in villages. That is why they try to inflict maximum damage," the head of the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity is sure.

Unique archives

Dirty Russian boots also walked through the archival achievements of Ukraine. For example, several archives in the Chernihiv and Kherson regions were destroyed, most of them in rural communities. The archives of national minorities, which contained the history of German and Jewish settlements,

were also destroyed.

"Unique archival materials were lost that did not have time to get to the central repositories. The Rashists primarily targeted civilian infrastructure: military recruitment offices, regional or local district administrations, and police stations were destroyed in order to paralyze local life. In addition, many archival library and museum collections that were evacuated from the temporarily occupied territories are now also in inadequate storage conditions, packed or stored in conditionally safe premises, but without the necessary climate control," he notes.

"Extremist" literature

The situation with the preservation of library collections is no less complicated, since the Russians are following the same strategy and totalitarian methods of the Second World War – entire Ukrainian libraries are being completely destroyed in the occupied territories. There are documented cases of burning patriotic publications containing information about historical and cultural memory.

"We have received a document from the so-called Ministry of Education and Science of the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), dated early 2023, which contains an appeal to the leaders of the occupation regime to remove books from the library collections

according to the declared list. This list included literature on the Holodomor, textbooks, educational materials and reference books on the history of Ukraine for primary schools and other educational institutions. Literature, by the way, that promotes European values. Even comic books for children and teenagers, which, according to the occupiers, apparently posed a "threat" to security, but in fact were an obstacle to the brainwashing of the population. Also, journalistic and analytical materials published after 2014, after the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian war, a series of books about famous Ukrainians – "all fiction about the events of modern history," says the head of the museum.

The "black" list also includes a fiction book by Daniel Hryhorchuk, an American of Ukrainian descent, "Myth and Madness".

"Daniel Hryhorchuk is a well-known toxicologist who has visited Ukraine many times. His expertise was very important in diagnosing the illnesses of the Maidan participants who died from poisoning by unknown gases that Ukraine has yet to identify. Hryhorchuk has written a novel in English in which he describes not only the events of Maidan and the Revolution of Dignity, but also the entire history of Ukraine, mythology and rituals,





and Ukraine in the period of Kyivan Rus in an accessible and interesting form for teenagers and young people. The book contains an interesting story about psychiatric hospitals during the Soviet era, where they tried to "fight" dissidents. We managed to translate and publish this unique book about the Ukrainian struggle for freedom. And, of course, it would have had a significant impact on the worldview of young people in the occupied territories," Poshyvaylo said.

The museum staff also recorded stories of residents of the Kyiv region whose homes were raided by the Russian military during the occupation, Ukrainian books were burned in their yards, and "special" raids were organized in the houses where such "extremist" literature was found.

"We visited libraries and cultural centers in the de-occupied territories, and the books were just scattered, obviously they were cleaned and checked. There is a very purposeful and professionally thought-out methodology of clearing the information and cultural space, for which neither human nor financial resources are spared. Everything is being done to ensure that propaganda functions properly," the museum's general director said.

Irreparable losses

The scale of the damage caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine is enormous. Just the counted objects of cultural infrastructure amount to about two thousand irreparable losses. Of course, this list is far from being complete, as it does not include the "gray zone", the occupied territories, and those where active hostilities are taking place. At present, the Ukrainian side does not know exactly what is

going on in the occupied territories.

"At the moment, thanks to satellite systems and monitoring, we can speak with confidence only about the destruction of monuments, which are also part of the cultural heritage. Monuments of modern history and its heroes are being destroyed. For example, the monument to Vasyl Slipak, a famous singer of the Paris National Opera who participated in the Revolution of Dignity and died during the fighting in the east of the country, was destroyed. In its place, monuments to Lenin and local "heroes" of the LPR-DPR will be erected," the head of the museum said.

In terms of figures, we are talking about at least \$65 billion in damage caused by Russian aggression in the cultural sphere alone. However, it is very difficult to put a monetary value on the intangible, because cultural heritage consists not only of buildings, but first of all of people – their experience, knowledge that should have been passed on from generation to generation.

"When we talk about cultural heritage, there are different ways to assess the damage. There are monetary losses, where the value of the building itself is estimated, and there are losses that cannot be estimated. These are archaeological collections, works of art, sometimes unique private collections that are not even properly accounted for and are not in the state registry. We know of a significant number of displaced "carriers" of intangible cultural heritage: artisans, residents who knew local rites and customs, local craftsmen and folklorists. There is evidence of the total destruction of the cultural heritage of the

Crimean Tatars. So, in terms of human resources, the cultural capital has suffered enormous damage: many cultural workers have left, and unfortunately a significant number of workers have died," Poshyvaylo says.

The struggle for culture

But Ukraine does not give up and is looking for a way for future recovery. For example, the National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine from the Consequences of the War was created for this purpose. According to the director of the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity, Ihor Poshyvaylo, many projects are being created to assess the damage and risks of possible future damage, and to develop strategies for early reconstruction and restoration.

"I am personally a member of the European Commission's Cultural Heritage Preservation Group, which has 26 members from around the world. We have already developed recommendations at the EU level, not only for the government of Ukraine, but also for the governments of European countries on the preservation of cultural heritage and the stabilization of damaged buildings. This is extremely important because it is the first emergency work, because until it is possible to rebuild the object due to the threat of its repeated destruction, it is very important to "preserve" it properly. In this regard, many international donors, global foundations and organizations and UNESCO help us. They actively provide grants for research, 3D scanning of damaged objects or those with a potential threat of damage. Today, documentation with modern technology is the only protection against complete destruction. For example, it is impossible to protect St. Sophia of Kyiv from rocket fire, so we can only hope for laser scanning for further reconstruction," he emphasizes.

Rapid response teams are also being set up to work with rescue and firefighting teams on the ground to take action to save cultural heritage sites. In this context, cooperation with the military is also important today. In particular, the museum has created a pilot project – a Terrorist Defense Unit for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage – to train the military and gain access to restricted areas for the evacuation of cultural property.

Workshops and trainings are planned in Ukraine to make the cultural sector even more resilient to potential threats in this battle for culture and the war of cultures.




ФЕДЕРАЛЬНА ПРОГРАМА «ЖИТЛОВА ДОПОМОГА УКРАЇНЦЯМ» (HAU)

ВИМОГИ

- Мати статус УНР (Український гуманітарний пароль)/U4U з датою в'їзду до США в період з 24.02.2022 по 30.09.2023.

Відповідність вимогам НЕ є гарантією допомоги. У зв'язку з обмеженими ресурсами, програма HAU надаватиме пріоритет домогосподарствам, які найбільше цього потребують.

НЕОБХІДНІ ДОКУМЕНТИ

- Копія документу підтверджуючого особистість з фотографією
- І-94 або інше підтвердження статусу УНР/U4U
- Підтвердження орендної плати та інформація про орендодавця (квитанції про орендну плату, контракт оренди, форма W9, контактні дані орендодавця)
- Копія квитанції про оплату комунальних послуг із зазначенням прізвища та адреси)
- Підтвердження адреси

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"SHE SAID SHE WOULD NOT LEAVE ME, THAT SHE LOVES ME. AND THAT TEARS ME APART."

How two years of war have hardened Ukrainian women. And how they help relatives who have lost limbs.

Anastasia Vararu

On the eve of Ukrainian Women's Day, a national holiday now celebrated on February 25, I came to Superhumans to talk to the wives of military personnel.

"Almost always there are relatives with wounded soldiers: mothers, sisters, wives, brides. They are the first to know about the injuries," says Olga Rudneva, CEO of the Superhumans Prosthetics Center in Lviv. In most cases, psychologists have not worked with them, and they rarely get help in the first weeks after the injury of a loved one. It seems that their efforts are taken for granted. Society does not always recognize their contribution and how their lives have changed dramatically. That is why it is important for me to talk about this.

Let me give you some examples.

Our Petro's wife, who had two lower limbs amputated, broke her back. It is clear that he needed help with the prosthesis. Now she sits near the office where the rehabilitation therapist sees him. Our Denys' mother has been with him since the first day of his injury. I videotaped the moment he stood on his short prostheses for the first time, and she reached out to him and said: "These are our first steps back." Denys is 24 years old and his mother was by his side as he learned to walk for the second time. Another of the wonderful families who have been fitted with our prostheses has started their own meat jerky business. He has a double amputation of the upper limbs, but the support and help of his wife motivates him to run the business despite the challenges of the amputation.

So now we are talking about women who cut meat because they have a family business. We are talking about those who take care of the needs of the household while learning to maintain a balance between over-care and help. They hold a cigarette and shake off the ash. They have learned how to put on and take off prostheses and have mastered many other new skills. And yet they remain off-screen. But they are heroes! And we are talking about everyday heroism that we as a



society fail to recognize and minimize. So I want to turn the spotlight on and shine a light on these great and strong women. "They have a lot to tell and we can learn a lot from them," Olha said.

I am about to meet the wife of one of the superhuman patients. After touching the sensor on the wall, the door opened. A man with two prosthetic upper limbs sat calmly in a chair and watched with satisfaction as his occupational therapist "took over" the responsibility of peeling the last potatoes.

This is Serhiy Petchenko, an ATO veteran who volunteered for the armed forces at the beginning of the full-scale war. He served in many areas, including Bakhmut. However, he was badly injured away from the battlefield. On June 11, 2023, he was returning home from a combat unit by the Kyiv-Kharkiv train. "Probably something was put in his food or drink, because he does not remember all the events of that terrible night. My husband was thrown off the train. As a result, he lost two arms and part of a foot. In similar circumstances, 8 other soldiers were injured, of whom only two survived," writes

his wife in her blog, trying to publicize this terrible event.

- "I'm Serhiy," the man said, "Anya went to get a manicure, but she should be back soon."

I also say my name. I take a step forward and clumsily shake the prosthetic right arm above the placement of the hand. I have yet to master the skill of doing this naturally. An unknown object is attached to the prosthetic right arm. Later I realized that it was a special attachment with a knife attached to it. For lunch we have fried potatoes cooked by Serhiy.

A moment later, a tall, slim, young woman came confidently into the office. She looked a little worried, but her face was as friendly and beautiful as possible. Blond hair that fell below her shoulders, wide eyebrows, lips accentuated by a delicate shade of pink gloss. This is Anna Petchenko. She immediately turned to the man and showed him her manicure. After meeting her, I suggested that we move to another room to talk without distracting Serhiy from the process.

"Before the full-scale invasion, my business was my main hobby. Busi-

ness development gave me great pleasure and I spent almost all my time on it. I also went to the gym. Now life has changed. I don't have much free time, but I have a desire to live the way I used to. Serhiy and I have been together for a long time and I want to keep what we have now for many more years. Together we are raising a wonderful son, Nazarchyk. He is three years old, and here at Superhumans everyone knows and hears him well," Anna smiled and continued, "So this is what inspires us.

"In June 2023, Serhiy was returning home from his military unit, but he didn't make it. He was simply thrown off the train and disappeared for 5 days. I learned from the police that my husband was found on the tracks and that he was in serious condition in a hospital in Kharkiv. His arms were run over by the train. A criminal case was opened. But 8 months have passed and the perpetrators have not been found. There have been many similar cases involving the military, but almost all of them were fatal. I understand that we will not return his hands, but we want to find the guilty party. It's important for Serhiy to know that". After describing the horrific circumstances that changed her reality forever, Anna shared what was to come.

While Serhiy was undergoing acute treatment, she went through a "difficult bureaucratic quest" with stations to quickly collect all the necessary certificates. Anna says she had to submit something everywhere, get it, make a lot of copies, take it, certify it, bring it back. And she had to get to the hospital in time to see her husband and take care of the child. Then there was an important and long stage of sending questionnaires to all possible prosthetic organizations, until in September Serhiy received a letter from Superhumans. Before that, Anna filled out the questionnaires on their website, collected and attached all the necessary medical documents. For several months now, Serhiy has been wearing the prosthesis and is once again mastering his usual daily skills. According to Philippe Grushko, co-founder of Superhumans, the average cost of a prosthesis in 2013 was about \$15,000. But in many cases, the center covers nearly 100 percent of the cost for patients.

While Serhiy and I waited for his wife, I asked: What was Anna's role in the rehabilitation process? He stood up from his chair, straightened his shoulders where the prostheses were attached, gestured, and answered:

"When you realize that you've had the



misfortune of losing your arms, which are responsible for 90% of human activity, you don't want to live or be treated. You want to end it as soon as possible and that's it. Just to end it. And my wife pulled me out of it. Anya said that everything would be okay, that she would not leave me, that she loves me. And that pulled me out. You start to look around, you start to think. You start to hope," he replied.

The man asked: "What do you need me for?" Anna replied that she was willing to provide the necessary prostheses for any money, and that she would "knock on doors" everywhere and ask for help.

"Now," says Serhiy, "as she said, everything worked out."

Anna has clearly demonstrated the quality for which she fell in love with her beloved 19 years ago – the ability to make every effort to do as she says, to take care of her loved one.

The results of the 24th National Survey Ukraine at War in 2023, conducted by the sociological group Rating, show that more than half of Ukrainians (65%) have relatives who have joined the armed forces since

the beginning of full-scale war. With these families in mind, Anna shared her top 4 recommendations:

- "Be patient. It will help to wait and accept what may happen or has happened. Despite and in spite of everything, you have to learn to be patient. I don't always succeed, but I don't stop trying."

- "Communicate constantly. They lack support there. They will look for it elsewhere if they don't get it from those closest to them. Write, call!"

- "Keep a journal or blog. I decided to start an Instagram blog. To talk about our life and talk about this issue. How my husband and I deal with our challenges. How we live, how the prostheses work, what he has learned, how we explain and communicate with our son. I believe our story can inspire many people. To encourage them to fight for their loved ones, to support their marriage with them, and to make the effort to not only keep their family together, but to be happy. It is hard work."

- "And maybe just to love. To love faithfully and devotedly."

WOMEN'S MILITARY UNIFORMS – RESPECTING WOMEN'S DIGNITY

Bohdana Sadomska

Every year on March 8, the world celebrates International Women's Day. What the Soviet government turned into a holiday for "family keepers," "the jewel of the team," and "the weaker sex" is actually a day of struggle for women's rights and gender equality. 59% of respondents believe that women and men in Ukraine have the same opportunities for career growth, and 61% – for wages, according to last year's survey by the Rating Group.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the number of women in the Ukrainian army has increased by about 40%. Thus, in the fall of 2023, more than 62,000 women worked in the armed forces, more than 43,000 of them were servicewomen, according to the Military Media Center. Another study by Rating showed that 64% of respondents have a "definitely positive" attitude to women serving in the army, and 65% believe that it is more difficult for women to build a career in the army than for men. In addition, until 2024, the state provided female military personnel with men's underwear, uniforms and ammunition.

On February 1, 2024, for the first time in the tenth year of the war, the public sector helped provide female soldiers with sets of women's military uniforms from the Ministry of Defense. The model was a set developed and tested by the volunteer initiative Arm Women Now, which has been providing women in the military with the necessary supplies since 2022. The women's uniforms were created on their own: they collected donations, organized fundraisers, and enlisted the support of famous athletes and Ukrainian pop stars. The cost of a set of summer uniforms is UAH 2,200 because they are sewn in small batches in Ukrainian production facilities that employ internally displaced persons and whose taxes stay in Ukraine. Although the Ministry of Defense has already started to provide uniforms for women, there will obviously be a shortage, as there is only one set of uniforms per year for women in the combat zone, and they wear out much faster. So Arm Women Now continues to help women soldiers and



Iryna Nikorak

to communicate with the public sector about reforms.

According to Iryna Nikorak, the founder of the project, a member of parliament and chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Veterans' Rehabilitation, every year when the army received men's uniforms, they went to a seamstress to have them altered. However, it is obvious that in the context of hostilities, women at the front do not have this opportunity. It should be understood that women's uniforms are not about beauty, but about the functionality of the uniform and the effectiveness of women as a combat unit in it. Not all member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have women's uniforms, but Ukraine currently has one of the highest rates of women in the armies of NATO member states – 7%. In NATO countries it ranges from 0.3% to 20%. However, Ukraine, as noted by Deputy Defense Minister Natalia Kalmykova, has the largest number of women on the battlefield in modern world history.

"In April '22, as a civilian who had never been in the army, I learned that women were given men's uniforms and,

worst of all, men's underwear. This was strange to me and showed the inequality of service conditions. When we talk about the reform of the clothing of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, it is first of all about respecting the dignity of women. A woman cannot serve in men's underwear, thermal underwear or uniforms. Thanks to the publicity of the reform we initiated, more than a year and a half of communication with the Ministry of Defense, we managed to obtain state approval of both underwear and uniforms. The Ministry has already placed a state order for 65,000 sets of uniforms for 2024. And I know that the underwear that has been introduced is only two items. All other items – winter uniforms, two types of thermal underwear – have not yet been delivered, but we continue to communicate actively. We have developed many samples and are testing them with women in combat positions. We have already provided more than 6,500 women with uniforms. As a volunteer organization, we are constantly analyzing, taking comments into account, and refining. We have handed over all the developments and samples of the

underwear and uniforms we have designed to the Ministry of Defense in order to speed up the preparation of technical specifications and amendments to the existing orders of the Ministry of Defense. Many other items of clothing need to be introduced. There are more than 62,000 women in the Armed Forces alone, but we should consider the entire security and defense sector, where tens of thousands of women serve in the National Guard, the National Police and the State Border Guard Service,” says Iryna Nikorak, commenting on what has been done and what is planned.

According to Iryna, visually the uniforms do not differ from those of the men: the same material, the same pockets. The patterns are different. The vests are narrower and more fitted around the shoulders to prevent excess fabric from piling up and rubbing off when the vest is worn for long periods of time. The vest is also designed for the chest. The pants have a higher fit, wider at the hips and narrower at the waist, with double clips to adjust the width. The size chart for these sets ranges from XS to size 58, plus two full groups.

The uniforms were officially tested in two stages: on November 22 and May 23. About 50 women were trained in the training centers of the Ministry of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. However, since August 2022, the Arm Women Now volunteer project has been sending uniforms to the front every day and receiving feedback. As a result, 6,500 women have already tested the approved uniforms.

Despite progress with underwear and uniforms, the problem of footwear and ammunition remains. There is a shortage of boots of very small sizes, about 34-37 are not enough. Men's boots start at size 40. The Ministry of Defense also requires women's body armor weighing 8-10 kg, while the current offer in Ukraine is ceramic plates and inserts that minimize pressure in the chest area weighing 4.5 kg. The armor provided by the Ministry of Defense will be quite difficult to wear for many hours every day. Women at the front are mostly frail girls in sizes XS and S, and as Iryna notes, they need lighter body armor. So there are still many needs that the public sector continues to fill.



Sample of women's military uniforms by Arm Women Now

THE NEW MEANING OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS BEING FORMED

Karyna Nikitishina

In recent years, the attitude of Ukrainian society toward certain official holidays has become quite ambiguous. The catalyst for most discussions is the war: people do not want to support narratives that go back to the Soviet era. The next such holiday is March 8. A year ago, Diia ran a poll asking "Should we keep March 8 as a holiday? Although more than 60% of respondents said they wanted to keep the day off, the number of people with the opposite opinion continues to grow. It is worth noting that the issue of abolishing March 8 as an official holiday arose even before the full-scale invasion. Public figures, opinion leaders, NGOs and volunteer organizations, historians, as well as a more "ordinary" part of the population consider it inappropriate to celebrate this date.

There are various reasons for this: some people want to get rid of March 8 as a vestige of Russian influence and values; some people consider the traditional Ukrainian celebration of Women's Day (introduced in Soviet times) with the obligatory gift of flowers and the demonstrative washing of dishes by a man once a year as harmful to the authority of women in society as a whole; some people do not want to remove March 8 from the list of holidays, but for some reason consider it inappropriate to celebrate and congratulate others during a full-scale war. A year ago, a bill was proposed to cancel International Women's Day on March 8 and replace it with Ukrainian Women's Day on February 25 (Lesya Ukrainka's birthday). However, the project did not receive much support, as it was not entirely clear how the conditional celebration on February 25 would differ from March 8, apart from the different date from the Russians. Some people on social media began to congratulate each other on the new holiday, which does not actually exist, with the same cards with flowers and wishes for femininity. Therefore, not everyone really understood the essence of the proposal to cancel March 8.

Besides, we consider it inappropriate to go into the details of the history of International Women's Day in the world and in Ukraine. Every spring you can find many reminders of how the holiday came into being and why

women are so infantilized on this day in the former Soviet Union. Instead, I would like to emphasize the need to rethink this date. During the war, gender equality did not take on a new meaning, because the problem of its lack was always there. But now we can observe the greatest publicity, which is caused precisely by the need to defend Ukraine's independence. In contrast to the 81st place in 2022, Ukraine now ranks 66th in the Gender Equality Index, according to the Global Gender Gap Report for 2023. Despite this change, it is too early to talk about achieving full gender equality. For example, in line with EU standards and values, a gender quota of 40% for women in parliament has been set as of 2019. As of today, this standard is only half met.

Today, Ukrainian women are actively involved in all spheres of life, be it business, politics or volunteering. It can be assumed that the full-scale invasion, which brought a lot of suffering to Ukrainians, in its own way opened the door for women to many "male" professions, military careers, work in the security forces, and so on. Currently, there are more than 62,000 women in the armed forces, many of them in non-combat positions, but not by choice. There are several reasons for this: "There is an opinion that it is more appropriate to appoint a woman to the position of a clerk, who supposed to work more concentrated and calmly. There are also people who believe that women are not able to withstand heavy physical exertion. This is justified in some cases, when it is necessary to carry things that not every physically developed man can lift alone. But now there are many examples of women in the infantry, artillerymen, women as commanders, and so on. And all of them came to serve voluntarily, because the law on their compulsory mobilization has not yet been passed: they chose to defend their homeland on an equal footing with men. Therefore, women should not be underestimated. The ability to perform certain duties can be determined only by personal qualities, not by gender," the soldier shared his opinion.

At the end of January, a new draft law on mobilization appeared. According to it, there will be no compulsory

mobilization for all women, but any woman who has obtained a medical or pharmaceutical specialty will be subject to military registration. This means that joining the army or the police remains a reasonable personal choice for women. Despite this fact, a significant number of lyceums, universities of certain specialties and military recruitment offices continue to take a position that is detrimental to the country. On the one hand, we have many men who, unfortunately, do not want to fight. And these people end up at the front, they are obliged to defend the country. Many of them try to avoid the mobilization by any means and resort to illegal actions. On the other hand, we have fully motivated, brave girls and women who are ready to learn military skills to help win this war. But they are often denied, preferring men without adequate skills and motivation, just because of their gender.

The country is in the midst of a full-scale war for the third year, and yet normal conditions for the advancement of women have not yet been created. There is no mechanism for the state to encourage women to continue their service, and there are still many stereotypes about women in the army among the older generation. MP Iryna Nikorak noted that stereotypes force female defenders to work many times more than necessary to get to combat missions. Most combat positions were previously closed to women, even at the legislative level, but this did not stop those who wanted to. Since 2014, women have been unofficially performing "men's" work without the appropriate additional compensations and social guarantees that men receive. Many of them have been hired for rear positions like cooks, pretending to care: "Why do you have to fight? What if something happens to you, what will your children say?" It was only in 2018 that a law on equal rights and opportunities for men and women in military service was passed. Shortly after its adoption, people began to transfer from units where women were commanders, so as not to serve with the "weaker sex".

Nevertheless, positive trends are noticeable, especially due to the increasing number of women in the armed forces. Until the beginning of

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February this year, most women were forced to wear men's uniforms and bulletproof vests, which do not take into account the anatomical characteristics of the female body. There was only one uniform provided by the state – a ceremonial one with a skirt and heels. The production of practical uniforms for women was initially undertaken by volunteer organizations, which, as is often the case in many fields, have now become drivers of progress. Now, thanks to the combined efforts of volunteers, designers, and the state, all female soldiers will be provided with comfortable uniforms. The right bulletproof vest often saves lives; it is a necessity, not a whim. If the number of women in the security forces had remained low, it is unlikely that these changes would have been achieved this year.

According to women, the change in attitudes has been most noticeable among young men, who are more understanding of their female counterparts on the battlefield and see them as equals. You can feel that something is changing when you walk down the street, where there are advertisements for both men and women. "Today in Ukraine we have the largest number of women on the battlefield in the modern history of the world. They prove themselves not only as good military financiers or doctors, but also as brave soldiers who faithfully defend their homeland. Our task is to do everything possible to help them build their careers," emphasizes Natalia Kalmykova, Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine.

In other professions where the percentage of men is also much higher,

such as law enforcement and state emergency services, there have not yet been enough public shifts. But a new meaning of women's contribution to the common future of Ukraine is emerging. Therefore, we are confident that in the coming years every woman will have the right to be treated appropriately, to realize her career dreams, and Soviet stereotypes will disappear, just as we wish the aggressor to disappear from the political map of the world. It has not yet been decided whether to cancel the International Women's Day holiday, to cancel the March 8 holiday altogether, or to celebrate a similar holiday on another day. However, we are sure that a woman will always be happy to be sincerely congratulated for her professional achievements and moral qualities, just like a man. Not only on March 8, but on any day.

UKRAINIAN ENTREPRENEURS START STUDIES IN SILICON VALLEY

– a joint program of UCU and the Stanford Graduate School of Business

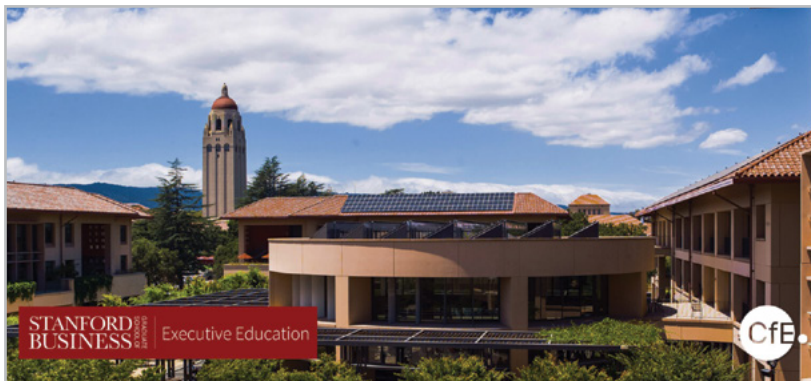
The CfE accelerator of Ukrainian Catholic University together with the Stanford Graduate School of Business (Stanford GSB) is launching a new educational program, Stanford Ignite Ukraine, for representatives of Ukrainian small and middle-size businesses. On February 19, there were 42 participants from Ukraine who began their studies. The program is intended to be a bridge between Ukrainian entrepreneurs and the Silicon Valley community and a catalyst for change and development in small and middle-size businesses in Ukraine.

"Uniting the missions of UCU and the Stanford Graduate School of Business, we hope to help Ukrainian entrepreneurs grow and implement ambitious and innovative ideas in their businesses, which will increase their competitiveness in the global ecosystem. The [Stanford Ignite Ukraine](#) program has a global goal: to give confidence to Ukrainian entrepreneurs and strengthen their businesses." So explained Ivan Petrenko, acting director of UCU's CfE accelerator.

In his opinion, the experience and knowledge gained in Silicon Valley will allow these Ukrainian entrepreneurs to re-think their businesses and direction of growth. The entrepreneurs will receive practical management instruments for introducing changes and a systemic approach to overcoming challenges which Ukrainian businesses now face.

The program has online and offline components. Online, the participants will work in teams on venture ideas, conduct interviews with the target audience, and prepare their first presentations. Offline will be a traveling module at the Stanford Graduate School of Business: study under the direction of professors, dedicated to developing a successful enterprise. There are also plans for sessions with invited speakers and meetings with representatives of venture funds, investors, and experts. In addition, the whole time they are on campus the participants will have the opportunity to interact weekly with the community of the Stanford GSB and Silicon Valley.

The Stanford Ignite Ukraine program is being organized by UCU's CfE accelerator together with the



Stanford Graduate School of Business, with the support of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, the USAID Competitive Economy Program in Ukraine, and Ukrainian Catholic University.

"The Ministry of Economy supports the Stanford Ignite Ukraine project because this is a unique opportunity at no cost to study at one of the world's best business schools. We believe that Ukrainian entrepreneurs who strive to develop their businesses and, in parallel, receive new knowledge will have a truly invaluable experience." So said Yuliya Svyrydenko, First Vice-Prime Minister of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine.

How did the idea for the Stanford Ignite Ukraine program come about?

Ivan Petrenko explained that it all began with personal contacts. Nataliya Anon, a Director of the Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation, partner of UCU, and member of the Angel One Fund's Advisory Council, helped start the program. She has lived in the USA for over 20 years, where she founded her own IT company.

"Earning an MBA at the Stanford GSB 23 years ago, I dreamed that Ukrainian entrepreneurs would also gain knowledge and experience from professors at one of the world's best business schools, which would help them not simply develop their own businesses but also give an opportunity to compete in international markets. I believe that this program will help start new businesses, develop existing ones much more quickly, and create more new workplaces. This will help strengthen Ukraine's economic power in such a difficult time," said Nataliya Anon.

Understanding that Ukrainian entrepreneurs are constantly working with the challenges of war and have a great need for development, Anon shared the idea with her former professor, Charles A. Holloway, who, even at the age of 90, continues to work at the Stanford GSB. Prof. Holloway gladly supported Anon's idea and advised her to turn to Prof. Yossi Feinberg, responsible for the Stanford Ignite program. The professor immediately supported the idea: *"The resilience, ingenuity, and perseverance of the Ukrainian people inspire the world, especially how business innovates in war conditions. Stanford Ignite Ukraine is exactly the Program that will help Ukrainian leaders and their businesses thrive while minimizing possible risks."*

He also presented Anon to Jonathan Levin, Dean of the Stanford GSB, who saw enormous potential in creating this kind of "bridge" between Ukraine and the Silicon Valley community. And so was born cooperation between UCU and the Stanford Graduate School of Business for the next four years. Anon is financing the entrepreneurs' studies. Grant funds from the USAID Competitive Economy Program in Ukraine are covering other expenses.

Stanford Ignite Ukraine: Contents of the program

Then the formation of the program itself began. At first it was developed for startups. However, in the work process, the team understood that there would be a much more positive influence if they could help small and middle-size businesses: *"Inasmuch as the startup industry paused somewhat with the start of the war," said Ivan Petrenko.*

The program itself lasts seven weeks. The first month is online study. The participants will then for three weeks go to Stanford for practical work on projects. At the end, they plan to organize a number of meetings with the business community, both Ukrainians and Americans in California. The participants will also have a number of meetings with investors from Silicon Valley, who could, in the future, become potential investors or partners in their businesses.

*"We want to help owners and directors of enterprises make their businesses more successful and build effective business models and products/services. Many of them are looking to go to outside markets; they want to release new products or improve already-existing ones. We will help them do this. The **Stanford Ignite Ukraine** program will focus on those items which need, as a rule, the most attention: sales, marketing, and distribution. We will also talk about leadership in conducting business and attracting investments,"* said Ivan Petrenko.

At the end of the program, UCU's CfE accelerator will continue to work with the participants in Ukraine and monitor their success, above all with qualitative indicators: the number of investments made, the creation of workplaces, outside markets they manage to reach, and increase in sales. This, in Ivan Petrenko's words, will give the organizers an opportunity to understand how effective the program was and what should be improved in the next admissions campaign.

How were the participants selected?

The organizers decided to focus on the owners of small and middle-sized businesses who already have at least three years of entrepreneurial experience. It is important that the company was registered in Ukraine, has no less than eight hired and officially employed workers, and also that the owners are fluent in English.

After the contest was announced and promoted, **977 applications for participation** in the program came from various regions of Ukraine: Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Ivano-Frankivsk, Dnipro, Donetsk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia. Those who met the technical requirements sent letters in which they described their motivation and expectations.

Among the 42 participants who were selected are representatives of various areas, in particular: a service for finding and shipping medicines, Liki24.com; Athlon Avia, unmanned solutions; the Gres Todorchuk communications

agency; the JUL clothing brand; Reka-va, a CleanTech startup which creates biodegradable products from coffee grounds; Gorgany, a network of stores with tourist and sports clothing and equipment; Spell Chocolate, a producer of Belgian chocolate; Dukachi, a brand of jewelry products; hotline.finance, a service to compare and form insurance products online; YedynkaDGTL, a company which specializes in marketing and web development; and others.

Strong business is one of the supports of our freedom and security in the future: participants' expectations

One of the participants in the Stanford Ignite Ukraine program is Andriy Bandrivskyy, producer and distributor of equipment and clothes for hiking and sports at Gorgany and a **graduate of the UCU Business School**.

"For the last two years, our mental resources have focused on the struggle with the challenges of war: how to remain steady, support the team, be of use to clients, earn money, and help the army. We all dream of freedom, of a strong Ukraine, which will be able to defend itself from any aggression. For this, we need to become a wealthy country. And there is no other way than to build outstanding companies, brands and products known worldwide. This already needs to be done, but you need to learn how," explained Andriy Bandrivskyy. *"I applied to the program because, I think, this is a unique opportunity to study at the world's top business school. I am very interested in better understanding how in 10 years US companies become global. I want to see how they think and gain this experience in order to get involved in the process of developing my company so that it also can grow and become known in the world. In my opinion, **strong business is one of the supports of our freedom and security in the future.**"*

Olesia Yedynak-Khoma, founder and CEO of **YedynkaDGTL**, a company which specializes in marketing and web development, shared her expectations.

"I decided many years ago that, absolutely, I will study at Stanford sometime. So when I read about this opportunity and that the program's goal is to help small and middle-sized businesses become more innovative and enter new markets, I saw it as a sign. It's also important to me that the UCU CfE accelerator are organizers. I share common values with them," explained Olesia Yedynak-Khoma. *"Our goal at the company now is to develop an export*

strategy to build systemic sales abroad. But in current conditions, this has to be done very quickly, considering the influence of world stagnation. In connection with entering outside markets, we as a company are beginning work with new types of organizations and launching new products for them. Earlier we worked more with large companies and organizations. This time, entering new markets, we're aiming at startups, accelerators, venture businesses and companies that create innovations. In the longer perspective, we plan to launch our own products and Startup Studio. I expect that the Stanford Ignite Ukraine program will give the opportunity to get into the needed environment, to talk over and test my hypotheses. But new knowledge, acquired in one of the world's best business schools, and corresponding acquaintanceships will certainly significantly speed up my transformation as an entrepreneur and also my company and open new horizons."

Business in the context of war

Ivan Petrenko emphasized that Ukrainian small and middle-sized businesses, which continue to work with high quality, are one of the discoveries with the start of the full-scale invasion: *"When foreign entrepreneurs travel to us and see with their own eyes that business continues to work, create workplaces, launch new products and services, and enter outside markets, they don't understand how this is possible."*

Small and middle-sized business is the basis of any economy. Entrepreneurs need support in the conditions of war. And launching a program like this is also an educational contribution to the future victory.

"It's important that this program not be a one-shot. So the next admissions campaign for Stanford Ignite Ukraine will start in fall 2024. Later on, perhaps, we will be able to organize studies for professors and students of UCU. It will be very interesting for us to monitor the community which is formed through this program and how Ukrainian entrepreneurs will introduce this new, high-quality experience into their businesses and institutions," sums up Ivan Petrenko.

We add that the USAID Competitive Economy Program in Ukraine supports Ukrainian business with the goal of increasing the competitiveness in Ukraine's internal market and also in international markets and also provides Ukrainian companies with opportunities to enjoy the benefits of international trade.

A SPACE WITHOUT SYMBOLS OF EXECUTIONERS

Anastasiia Krupka

Officially, decommunization in Ukraine began in April 2015, following the adoption of a series of laws condemning the Communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes and banning the propagation of their symbols. However, the process has intensified significantly since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Last month, for example, the head of the Lviv regional state administration, Maksym Kozytskyi, said that the Lviv region was the first in Ukraine to complete decommunization. Hromada spoke with Anna Herych, secretary of the working group on decommunization at the Lviv Regional State Administration, about how this was achieved and what steps Ukrainians can expect after decommunization.

- How long has the process of decommunization been going on in Ukraine?

- This process began in the 90s, when people began to remove monuments to totalitarian politicians who were torturers of the Ukrainian people, such as Lenin or Dzerzhinsky. The second wave of decommunization began after a monument to Lenin, a monument of history and monumental art, was demolished without permission in Kyiv on December 8, 2013. After that, a number of MPs and activists in Ukraine began to promote and lobby for laws regulating the decommunization process at the legislative level. For example, in 2015, for the first time, a law was passed that changed the names of egregious settlements, such as Dnipropetrovsk. However, the document contained many exceptions and did not pay much attention to the period of occupation, which we used to call the Soviet era.

- In 2023, more than 300 monuments of the Soviet era were dismantled in the municipalities of the Lviv region. In fact, the region has the best indicators of decommunization in all of Ukraine. How did you achieve this?

- For example, in the course of one year, 312 monuments to Soviet soldiers, kolkhozes, kolkhoz peasants and other ideological symbols that appeared after the Second World War were dismantled in the Lviv region. In Galicia, it was clear to many that the War of



Independence did not end in 1945, as the UPA army fought until the 1950s. It was also well understood that the Ukrainians were mostly taken by force to the Red Army. In fact, Russia is doing the same thing now, taking people in Donetsk, Luhansk, or Crimea to the army and forcing them to fight for someone else's interests.

Since 2014, there have been many ATO/JFO veterans in the Lviv region who were involved in decommunization. But things were very difficult, there was a lot of paperwork at the legislative level, even reaching the courts. But when a full-scale war broke out, people from many communities in the Lviv region decided that it was necessary to dismantle monuments to Soviet soldiers en masse, because they began to see them as occupiers who were now invading our land with even greater force. Thus, on the initiative of the community, about 70-80 monuments were dismantled in the region in 2022.

At that time, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy began to draw the attention of the departments of the regional administrations to the fact that among the monuments there are those with the status of a monument and that they say that they cannot dismantle all of them. However, there is a procedure that helps to remove this status. So the NGO "Decommunization of the Lviv Region" brought together the authorities, active civil society and business (the latter was very necessary, because during the war we cannot collect funds from communities for dismantling) and created

a working group at the regional state administration. This is how we managed to legitimize the public initiative. Then there were working trips to each municipality, which helped not only to tell the representatives how to raise funds or equipment, but also to identify additional monuments for dismantling. In January 2023 there were 183 of them, and then the number increased to 313, and we are currently working on removing the last one.

- How did local residents perceive the removal of the monuments?

- Most of the demolitions took place without protest. Of the 312 monuments dismantled, perhaps 12 were opposed by the local community. Very often it was due to ignorance of history: people told myths, talked a lot about how they had a good life during the Soviet era. These were mostly older people who had studied history in a Soviet school and had spent their youth in that period. They identified their nostalgia with the monument they used to take care of. At the same time, when it came to the UPA or the OUN, they said that they were bandits, that they were people who did not want to fight and therefore went to the forests. The community of Lopatyn, located on the border of the Lviv region and the Volyn region, was the worst affected by decommunization. By the way, the Volyn region has not yet created a working group, although we are in active communication with representatives of the administration of various regions and activists.

- How is the situation in other re-

gions of Ukraine?

- In other regions, unfortunately, the situation is not as good as in Lviv. In some places, for example, the head, deputy head, or other official may have relatives in Russia or be displaced from there, and there is not always an understanding that this is the occupation regime. Therefore, officials often refer to various contradictions in the law to avoid participating in decommunization. Sometimes people do not understand that tanks, stars, hammers and sickles are ideological symbols that influence the education of our children and that everything will continue until we remove all this from public space. However, we try to put pressure on the communities with inquiries, appeals from the military or a public organization. If we don't get an answer, we write letters to the ombudsman.

- Where do the demolished monuments go?

- In the Sumy region there is a whole forest of monuments that are brought there from all over Ukraine. As for the Lviv region, we did not take anything there. Pavlo Gudimov, who works with museums, had an idea to create an exhibit to show how totalitarianism created the ideological cult of the Second World War, "victory" and "one people". However, this idea was not realized because it was expensive and complicated, and many monuments were just copies of each other. In addition, more than 90% were already in disrepair and fell apart during the dismantling process. In some communities, the dismantled monuments were used as building material for roads. We kept the best examples in the Territory of Terror Memorial Museum of Totalitarian Regimes.

- As we can see, during the full-scale invasion the process of decommunization accelerated significantly. Why is it important even in wartime?

- The most important thing is that people themselves realized that the occupier who came in 1939-1945 still crawls to us. All these Soviet monuments have an ideological effect on the people who live near them and on the education of our children. We see that when the Russians conquer a territory, the first thing they do is to restore Soviet names to streets and settlements. We see the angry comments that the occupiers leave on social media or in the media under videos of monuments being dismantled, and we know about criminal cases (in Russia) against government officials in neighboring Lithuania, Latvia,

or Estonia who are also removing all this garbage from their territory.

- You mentioned the renaming of streets. What is the situation there?

- Yes, place names are another important area. Since July 2023, we have a law on decolonization, which allows municipalities to decide on street names or propose names for settlements within six months, which are voted on by members of the Verkhovna Rada. Since January 27, the prerogative to determine the names of streets, for example, has been vested in the head of the municipality. In addition, heads of military administrations can now rename streets.

- What will replace the monuments? What is the logical continuation of the decommunization**policy?**

- We have already begun this work. It will be continued by the policy of Ukrainization and a just commemoration of the Second World War, where our military, who fought on the side of the Red Army, will be recognized as victims of this war, and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army will be put on an equal footing with the heroes. We have asked educational institutions with faculties of architecture, urban planning, sculpture, etc., to offer their graduates the opportunity to develop places honoring the heroes of Ukraine as part of their graduation thesis. We are talking not only about the soldiers of the current war, but also about those who have been forgotten or silenced.

ARTISTS SUPPORTING HUMANITARIAN AID FOR UKRAINE Pop up Art Exhibition/Fundraiser

Exhibition open Friday & Saturday, March 15 - 16, 12pm - 6pm

Fundraiser Event: Saturday, March 16
4:00 – 7:00pm

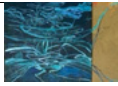


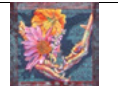

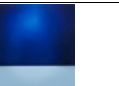
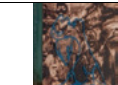

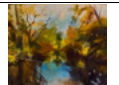
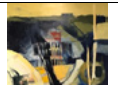


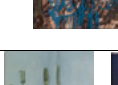

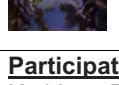
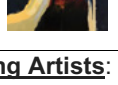

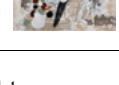
Shoh Gallery
700 Gilman Street
Berkeley, CA

Our Bay Area Women's Art Group invites you to a one evening only art event to raise money to help those who are suffering their third year of war in Ukraine. Our fundraiser will benefit two organizations, through sale of art and also direct donation at the gallery.

The orchestra, led by Dutch conductor Jereon Weierink, is based in Amsterdam and made up of Ukrainian refugee musicians. Performances allow the foundation to provide salaries as well as send humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

[Jereon Weierink conducting the Ukraine Liberation Orchestra](#)

A local nonprofit, [Hromada](#), is serving as a fiscal sponsor for the event so that donations will be tax deductible. A representative from Hromada, Igor Tregub, will be at the event. [Article in Marin Magazine about Hromada](#)

					
					
					
Participating Artists: Kathleen Truax Ruth Shapiro Pacia Sallomi Laura Malone Frances Lerner Karen Herold			Anne Faught Jennifer Fearon Heidi Brueckner Pat Bruning Johanna Baruch Emily Davis Adams		

EVENTS 2024

MARCH

Ha/Su	Pi/Mo	We/Tu	Th/We	Fr/Th	Sa/Fr	Sa/Ca
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

16 MAR

WOMEN IN ART – TRIBUTE TO LOCAL UKRAINIAN- AMERICAN ARTISTS

**UNWLA Northern California,
Branch 107 & Masha Made Magic**

Where: The Huddle, Google Visitor Experience, 2000 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View, CA 94043

When: Saturday, 11:30 AM – 4:30 PM

We are excited to announce a unique event for Women's History Month, which will shine a spotlight on the vital contributions of women in Ukrainian culture and art.

This event is free for visitors but your donations are always welcome!

Meet talented Ukrainian-American artists from California: see their unique art pieces, hear artist talks, and ask your questions! We gather Californian women artists of Ukrainian origin to showcase the diversity and uniqueness of their styles and techniques and pay tribute to their

talents. Learn about their journey in the arts, thoughts on cultural heritage, and dreams for the future.

In the evening, you can also expect poetry readings dedicated to female themes in Ukrainian poetry. Join us to enjoy beautiful works of classical and contemporary Ukrainian authors, and take the opportunity to read and share your favorite poems with guests!

Event schedule:

11:30 – Doors Open

11:30-1:30 – Artists Talks

1:30 - 2:30 – Panel Discussion

3:00 - 4:30 – Poetry Reading

FREE ADMISSION!

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2000-n-shoreline-blvd-mountain-view-ca-94043/women-in-art-tribute-to-local-ukrainian-american-artists/366811009480113/>

17 MAR

TARAS SHEV- CHENKO IN SACRAMENTO - 25 TIMES!

Where: Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 2531 Rio Linda Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95815 Brussels St, San Francisco, CA 94134

When: Sunday, 4 PM – 7 PM

The program includes the poetic works of the great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko by performances of students of the School of Ukrainian Studies, the Ukrainian Children's Center in Roseville (director Natalia Fanha), the Bandura Ensemble, the vocal ensemble "Kolyada" (director Andriy Kryshchakovich), creative youth of Sacramento and the surrounding area, and professional and amateur artists: Ivanna Andreykiv, Ola Herasymenko, Oleksandra Zabashta, Nataliya Kokhanyy, Oksana Manzhay, Marichka Omelchuk, Ivanna Taratula, and others.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/2531-rio-linda-blvd->

[sacramento-ca-95815/%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%81-%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%B2-%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%BE-25-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7/3596885980567760/](https://www.facebook.com/events/2531-rio-linda-blvd-sacramento-ca-95815/%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%81-%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%B2-%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%BE-25-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7/3596885980567760/)

23 MAR

"UKRAINIAN PYSANKA" WORKSHOP BY SOFIYA OHORODNYK

**UNWLA Northern California,
Branch 107 & Sofiya Ohorodnyk**

Where: St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Catholic Center, 445 Washington Street, Santa Clara, CA 95050

When: Saturday, 10:30 AM

Join us for an unforgettable workshop with Sofiya Ohorodnyk as she guides participants through the art of creating classic pysanky on March 23rd in Santa Clara, CA.

All essential materials provided (including chicken eggs, pens, wax, candles, dyes, plates, pencils, napkins, and a secure transportation box for your finished pysanka)

Suitable for participants aged 6 and above.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/445-washington-street-santa-clara-ca-95050/ukrainian-pysanka-workshop-by-sofiya-ohorodnyk/750207630435292/>

31 MAR

EASTER SUNDAY

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