

Yaroslav Hrytsak

Interviewers: Adam Reichardt, Iwona Reichardt

AR: We are interviewing Prof. Yaroslav Hrytsak for the Three Revolutions project. The interview is being held on September 15th 2016 in Lviv, Ukraine. Could you please start by telling a bit about yourself? Where are you from, where you were born?

YH: I was born in the Lviv region, in the countryside in a small village between Morshyn and Stryyi, those are the larger, major towns and actually my village was not quite a village. It was not yet a city, not yet a town, but already not a village. I was born to a peasant family. My father was a tailor, which helps me a lot in life, it was a good salary. Not a lot of the salary comes officially, so to say, and it helped me enter into the Lviv State University, which at that time was extremely corrupted including the department of history, I was interested in history since an early age. Since then I became a historian and I was caught by the transformation. In the 1980s, I was rather very active in different kind of activities under Gorbachev and the year before Ukraine's independence. I was a head of the historical commission of the Lviv's Lions Society [in audible] the first public organization here in Lviv. Then I participated in Rukh, I was on the council in Rukh. I was participating but mostly writing. It was a "write-as-you-go", not think-as-you, but write-as-you-go.

I experienced many things and know many people who were engaged in these processes, starting from the hunger strike in 1990 to the latest developments on Maidan. During the last Madian, I was very close to the Poroshenko team; I worked there as an expert. So I have a lot of information on what was happening there. So basically, I am not objective, I am rather biased. I was a part of this process.

IR: For our project that is actually a value. Going back to Soviet times, before *perestroika*, when you think about what your intellectual development and development of your political philosophy what do you think shaped you? Which thinkers? What kind of literature?

Influences

YH: Mostly rock music. Rock music; for my generation it was rock music. Western radio stations and those kind of things... You have to imagine that Ukraine was extremely provincialized and desperately isolated country. So probably had some glimpses or some names like Markuz, but with no knowledge of who they are, so to say. Uh, I was caught at the early years, late...early 20s, I was very much inspired French existentialism and more specifically by Camus. I don't know for some had to write an article on that or a book; but for our generation Camus was extremely important. I don't know what happened. Because probably my guess is that because Camus was at that time published and most importantly we read Camus in Polish. This was probably in *Literatura na świecie* [a Polish journal – transcriber's note]. I had no knowledge then, so to say, I was very much ... oh ... I disliked the communist system very much for a variety of reasons, first of all because of rock; but this was not elaborated in a kind of political attitude or anything like that. Secondly, I came from the region which was extremely nationalistic. It is considered the core of the Bandera movement. Bandera was born there. Bandera graduated from the Gymnasium-3 and most of the leadership from the OUN came from this region. Naturally, I know this story very well, as is the case for most in my generation, we had a family members who had been killed or repressed in the 1930s-40s and the family memory was very strong. It was considered in our family, in our village, to be very dishonest to become a communist. [The term] communist was a kind of, how to say, disparage... If you are communist there is something wrong with you. Your moral is very low. There is nothing in this climate, the main difference would be, to put some importance, the difference between my parents and me – and this is a generational difference - my parents knew about Poland from first-hand experience and they hated Poland and they hated Poles. Therefore, they never accepted the Solidarność. For me, it was quite different, for a part of my life I was listening to the radio *Jedynka*. So I had a different image of Poland, so therefore, for us, because also the main valuable information, many events, we learned from the Polish channels, Polish books, Polish journals. So we had a different attitude, and we were very thrilled by Solidarność. I remember it very well. So for my generation, for me personally, names like Kuroń or Michnik were legendary names. I am always amazed that I met them personally some years later, some years ago. But to finish this part, already by the beginning of the 80s, we were aware that it wouldn't last long, the system, it couldn't stand. There was a strong deficit of everything, soap, you know, butter, and things like that and I remember talking about this issue; and we were still students at the university. We were discussing when it will happen, about whether we will be young enough to experience this ... and mostly afraid of that. Because we were expecting some kind of great bloodshed, war or this kind of style, because we didn't believe that this would fall down peacefully. But the feeling was already there, that it wouldn't last that long – it was not sustainable. So therefore we met Gorbachev as a kind of surprise, we didn't believe him, actually – again it is very strong, how to put it, Gorbachev was very disliked here. For a variety of reasons. Not because of his liberalism, but because he was pretending to be liberal, we knew that. Because on several occasions and you probably ... this is another dimension that should be put very strongly. Under Gorbachev there had been some changes in each and every

republic in the Soviet Union except Ukraine. They kept the old leadership until the very end. I mean Shcherbitsky.

We didn't have *perestroika*. That was somewhere else. In Moscow, in Petersburg, in the Baltic states, in Georgia but not in Ukraine. Until the very fall of 1989, most likely months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, we still had this kind of very isolated regime and even being a participant in civil society, in *Rukh*, I felt very insecure. We had a feeling then that anything could happen. Ukraine was still very much like an isolated prison at that time. Until the end of April when Gorbachev visited the Vatican, he allowed ... permitted to legalize the church and then he gave permission for the *Rukh* movement to be in Kyiv. So this is when it all started. Therefore I would say Ukraine has a very strong, explosive potential and this explosive potential was kept under control until the fall of 89; and then exploded all of a sudden. It provided context also for what happened in 1990. Because of this explosion. We were late and were trying to catch up to the other republics.

IR: Speaking of the Granite revolution, the student revolution, were you involved in that?

YH: No, I was older. It was the younger generation. I was not a student anymore. This was a student revolution, I was already a PhD student ... I was not a PhD student, I was a young research fellow at the institute, the research institute. I was working in the older institutions and the student revolution was kept very much secret. I know, they were friends of mine. They kept it amongst themselves. They never told anybody. And you probably know the story if you talk to Markiyan [Ivashchyshyn] ... one of the reasons why the revolution was delayed was because there was a wedding. After the wedding they went to make a revolution. And they kept it very strictly confidentially secret, so nobody would ever know...it was quite unexpected.

IR: Were they afraid?

YH: No, they were not afraid, but I believe, you have to ask them, but from what I know from them they were trying to do it on their own. They wanted to make a separate revolution.

[Interruption in recording – end of first file 9.51]

YH: They were very nice kids but they kept it secret because they wanted to have a story of their own. They did it. So therefore, for most of us it came as a surprise. We learned it from the newspapers or from the radio, I don't really remember, it was kind of a surprise.

IR: So you never went to Kyiv at that...

YH: I don't really remember. I probably was there once or twice, but not as a participant. It was my impression that there was already a generational difference between them and us. They were early twenties, we were late twenties or early thirties. So there was a difference.

IR: And what is your impression, have they achieved anything...

YH: Very much so, very much so. Because this was a breakthrough. For the first time there was evidence that the system could give in ... [inaudible]... and this was the first time the authorities accepted something. And I wouldn't call this a revolution...

IR: Protests?

YH: Protests, strike or hunger strike, because I believe the revolution comes as an after fact, after the first and second Maidan because you want to have the continuation of the story, have this nice story, but that was not really the fact. Even though for the first time they used the Maidan but I don't see this as a revolution because the real revolution began later on. And it was a peaceful revolution, an unexpected revolution two years or a year later, I mean 1991 – this period of August 10th until December. It was a peaceful revolution, an unended revolution; a very ambivalent revolution but I believe a revolution was there at that time, not before. What we are missing in this picture? By putting a focus on the student strike we are missing some other important developments, and I believe the most important developments were the workers' strikes in Donetsk.

IR: Can you tell us more?

YH: At that time there were three large centers of anti-Soviet, well not anti-Soviet but *perestroika* protests: Lviv, Kyiv and Donetsk. Lviv was quite natural with *Rukh* in that sense; and Kyiv was kind of a deviation of the local party and also supported by the local intelligentsia very much; and therefore the students coming from the regions created this kind of momentum. But nobody really remembers the importance of Donbas at that time, the importance of Donetsk. Because in Donetsk there was a strike already in the middle of 1989 and they were the first to remove the communist party cells from the industry, in all of Ukraine. It was very anti-communist and the movement was very strong. At first they didn't want to make any kind of alliance neither with Lviv nor Kyiv. They felt themselves very much attracted to the Soviet scale; they went into some coalition with workers in the Urals; miners, because it was a miner strike. But at some point, it was June 1991, they made an alliance with *Rukh*. They made a statement and they suddenly realized that they had nothing to do with the Soviet Union any more. They didn't have any respect from Moscow and Moscow was far away. It was not their center. So they began thinking about Kyiv as the next feasible center and this was missing. Basically Ukrainian independence, the Ukrainian revolution of 1991, came as a compromise between the three centers: Lviv, Donetsk and Kyiv. Nobody really sees this [today]. There is a really good book on this issue, written by a German scholar, if I don't remember, the name escapes me. It is called the

first *inaudible* [3.45 second audio file] Vitkowski, I believe the name, Andreas Vitkovski [*unclear from the recording*], he was the first to make this point, the importance of Donbas, but he was not the first probably. There was a very good, by the way he is kind of a strange boy, he will be here, his name is Anatoliy Rusnachenko, he is a young – well he's not young, he is older than me – historian. He made his first dissertation on Donbas and the Donbas strike. He was the first to turn attention that something very important was happening in Donbas and the fact that Donbas was starting de-communisation. Not Lviv or Kyiv.

IR: So why is this not neglected, but underestimated?

YH: Because Donbas is quite often not seen as a part of Ukraine. Secondly because there is a belief that there are strong alternatives between Lviv and Donetsk. We are not talking about these moments when they come together. And thirdly because this alliance between Lviv, Kyiv and Donetsk was not a marriage of law; but marriage of reason, a pragmatic one. So once Ukraine reached independence, I mean without Donbas you would have 90% in the referendum. Without a doubt. But once they reached independence they experienced their expectations were false. Kyiv could offer them nothing and in 1993 they went from an alliance to Kyiv to a real confrontation with Kyiv. This was their protest, the worker strike in 1993 which provoked a deep political crisis in Ukraine and which led to the first or the second presidential and parliamentary elections in 1994. Therefore they went from the allies to foes. So nobody really remembers that. But in 1991, in this revolution, their role was very important.

AR: Do you see a connection between the students protests and the ...

YH: No. They were not talking to each other. In only one moment, for a very short period, even before the coup d'état. In June 1991 they made a statement. That they want to see Rukh rather... they don't respect their cultural or linguistic programme, but they saw Rukh as their ally. And this was the link, but then it disappeared, for sure. And then the movement itself disappeared because the leader disappeared. They were just workers, they couldn't do anything on their own ... there is actually a good book, interviews with the leaders called *Donbas Workers Speak* – it is a book that was done by a leftist, American professor from Pittsburgh. Who went to interview them in the early 1990s and he was talking to the leaders of the strike movement. Mostly they either died or just disappeared, not even one of them has been noticed among the DNR/LNR separatists. They just disappeared. What happened there afterwards, the local new mafia went over this movement and they controlled it; those who were not willing to collaborate with the mafia were destroyed, and those who stayed were made kind of dociled...

AR: So there is no connection between these workers' strikes and the separatist movements of today?

YH: Some people say there is, but not that movement. Because there is a very strong social element to the separatist movement, without a doubt, but not that strike, not this memory. Nobody remembers nowadays, most of all in Donbas itself. Because they don't want to confess to this kind of story, that there were supporting at that time Ukrainian independence. So therefore, since this is only workers' strike and it was not that much articulate or attractive; so people are talking about the Granite Revolution but not about the one that happened there, which I believe is much more important.

IR: It almost seem like Ukraine lost a momentum, in a way, by not developing what ...

YH: Without a doubt. It was a mistake.

IR: History would probably have turned completely differently...

YH: Yeah, I believe so to a large extent. But basically they were doomed because Donbas didn't have any intellectual leaders at that time. It's a classic illustration. As opposed to what happened in Poland, where there were intellectuals. There were no intellectuals, they were just workers. They were destroyed, they were trapped.

IR: Maybe we move to the Orange Revolution.

AR: Maybe we could start with ... were you a participant in the Orange Revolution?

YH: Not particularly. At that time I was teaching at Columbia University

AR: Okay...

YH: And I couldn't afford to go back. My family was there at that time but I was spending it very differently because I was making petitions, collecting my friends, making interviews and that kind of thing. I was, you probably remember or not, but we designed a letter, an appeal of the world intellectuals. We did it with Ola Hniatuk. And this is probably one of the most important documents at that time. Because everyone signed it: [Noam] Chomsky, Tony Judt, it was very much influential, somewhere around late November I believe. I did it from Columbia University. I was rather watching but not personally trying to do something. I was not participating directly. It was too short, probably...

IR: Did it come as a surprise, the revolution to you, or no?

YH: I had an article which I don't really remember, but Bogumila Berdychowska turned my attention to this article in which I was saying something that a revolution is bound to happen. What was my thesis or point at this moment that for Kuchma won't bring Ukraine back to Russia in the sense that he wanted Ukraine to be separate and independent, but he was Russifying Ukraine in a different matter. In terms of political order and political system which was very similar to the Russian system; especially in the case of transferring the

power from someone who is appointed. From Yeltsin to Putin; from Kuchma to Yanukovych. And I said it wouldn't happen in Ukraine because this was very dangerous and a revolution might happen.

AR: If we take a step back... were you involved in the movement Ukraine without Kuchma? Or had any contact with them?

YH: At that time I was in Vienna, I didn't have direct contact, but I was writing a lot with them. I was a public figure with texts, but not directly. I didn't have a physical presence at that time, I was in Vienna, I remember that.

AR: Would you say there is a connection, if we look at the wider picture? Including the student protests, the Ukraine without Kuchma ... did it all lead to the Orange Revolution?

YH: You know, I am a historian, I can say everything leads to everything. You know it's kind of complicated, being a historian, I could always claim this notion. But there is a certain track, yes. There is a certain track. Especially given the people that who were there and who were in the 1990s. Let me give you an example; and I remember the example very vividly. One of the leaders of this revolution was Markiyan Ivashchyshyn. He was the founder of the Dzyha ... I remember during this Kuchma, Ukraine bez Kuchma protest, I don't really remember the date, but I do believe it was either Catholic Christmas or Ukrainian Christmas, I presume it was Catholic Christmas, they had arrested him. The SBU came to arrest him. It was actually on Christmas Eve. I do remember this very vividly and they were counting on the fact that this was Christmas Eve, no one will react from the West. Because Kuchma was very sensitive to the reactions from the West, very sensitive. What we did, we had contacts, I personally with all my friends, we called each embassy to get their attention, so they arrested him around six or seven, by twelve he was already released. So that's what they did. So they knew the leaders and Markiyan Ivashchyshyn was one of the leaders. He was the leader of the student revolution and he was leading Ukraine without Kuchma. At that time he was, I believe, the owner of the *Lvivska Gazeta* (*Львівська газета*), which was probably one of the main voices of the resistance in Ukraine. So therefore they probably harassed him. And so there is this link, but also during the Orange Revolution ...

The thing is, I want somebody, actually I have PhD student who hopefully will write... to write the history of this generation. Not the generation, the history of these people. Of their milieu which is very much interconnected; their friends, girlfriends ... some of them got married. It is a close community, a community of friends, first of all. Second, they knew each other and they had previous experience and actually one of the leaders of this revolution was Yaroslav Rushchyshyn, with whom you should meet. He was also very active in the two other revolutions. This means there were three leaders, Markiyan Ivashchyshyn, Yaroslav Rushchyshyn and Oleh Tyahnybok. Because they came from the three students milieu; from the Lviv Polytechnic University, Lviv Medical Institute and Lviv National University; I don't really remember, I would have to check it. But the thing is, they were proposing Yaroslav Rushchyshyn to be the head and Rushchyshyn stepped down and said no, it is better to make it Tyahnybok. So by making this decision Tyahnybok came as a kind of political, starting a political ... political decision. But the thing is, in this milieu, it was very interconnected since then and it still is. And they have some important resources, because many of them became ... some of them became very good entrepreneurs or businessmen. They have money. And they were investing money into the protest. I remember ... I will fast forward, during the last Maidan, I was specifically cooperating with this group. The businessmen who are in their forties at this time, but then were in their twenties, some of them were leaders. They are the best organized group. They were always on the Maidan ... until it came to the organized state of Maidan, they were the most organized group. They went together, they have the resources and it was always good to be with them. You feel like a worker or a soldier in the unit, every role was written there. And this was the experience. Until probably the beginning of December, they were probably the strongest unit of the Maidan. What I am saying is that these were the personal stories. You could follow them. And I believe that to a certain extent they could transpose their granite experience to 2004 and 2013. Without a doubt there is a link. Without this granite revolution, there wouldn't be this experience. And in this sense, I say yes, there is a link there.

IR: OK, but during the Orange Revolution, if we could look at the opposition side. There were clearly two stands, one was more radical, no compromises with Yulia Tymoshenko, the other one was more open to negotiations. Taking this into account, that there was already a split there, how do you assess what happened after. Did it fail because of that?

YH: Largely, yes. Largely, yes. It turned out like this alliance between the Donbas workers and Lviv nationalists, very similar. Because Tymoshenko and Yushchenko were very different personalities. They couldn't stand each other. They couldn't stand before and they couldn't afterwards...

IR: They don't even hide this...

YH: Yeah they hated each other. It was a confrontation for the leadership. For sure Yulia Tymoshenko could match Yushchenko at that time, and his popularity at that time, and so she collaborated with him, but they were very much in confrontation. But, I wouldn't say this is the main reason for the failure. I would say the main reason for the failure was the strategy which was from the very beginning, from before the revolution;

and the politically tragic story of Yushchenko. You may remember it. He was not willing to go into politics. He was very much opposing it, for a long time. He knew this was not his. And he was right. I know that he was pulled into politics specifically by the group of Ukrainian intellectuals, the intelligentsia in Kyiv ... Mostly there were ambitions to raise him and to turn him into a politician. And they organized some seminars. I know this story, Mirosław Popovich told this story in detail if you want to reach him. He was one of the group. There were seminars to instruct him. They were talking about this amongst themselves on some special issues, and basically it was all done for him. He [Yushchenko] was sitting in the corner and making some notes. But the basic thing – the strategy was, first you have to do the nation...

[Interruption in recording – end of audio file 2]

YH: Do the nation first. The whole idea was, the whole strategy was that the reason we have failed so far was because there was no Ukrainian nation. So in order to have an economic success, you have start with building the nation. You have to start with history, with language and those kind of things...like the famine. And I believe it had a strong impact on Yushchenko. They made him that way. When he came to power it was his strategy, that he had to build a nation first and for that sake he would go into alliance with anybody, even with Yanukovych. He was a nation-builder. He himself was a nation-builder, of a modest Ukrainian nation. It was exclusive, very wrong and to some extent very stupid. Because what Ukraine needed at that time was economic structural reforms.

That was a strong side of Kuchma, by the way. The first attempt, rather successful attempt, of economic reforms was during the early period of Kuchma. Kuchma gathered all the reformers in 1994 and 1995, and this resulted in some positive economic changes by the end of the 1990s. This is my theory, not a theory, but a point. Both Maidans occurred when the situation was getting better, not worse. Because there is this rise in expectations. Let me tell you one example, which I believe is very important for me. The first time I heard about the possibility of revolution. Probably I was unconsciously repeating this thesis when I was writing a little later on. I came to know, I heard this thesis the first time, I remember because it was the day after 9/11. It was 9/11 and the 12th of September here in Lviv, we had Yevhen Kholova [?? 1.50 in recording] from Kyiv, a leading social scientist with his wife, they made monitoring of the Ukrainian society from the beginning of the 1990s; they keep repeating the same questions asking the same people and getting different results. He was saying that we were on the brink of political turmoil. Basically there is a new tendency of this social public opinion in the sense that if you ask the people whether the situation was getting better or worse compared to the previous year, the usual answer would be: Worse, worse and worse, each year. But then if you ask the people whether you bought a computer for your kid or if they bought a car or an apartment, the answer was rather, yes. So they were not lying – they were telling both sides because there were rising expectations. And with the rise of expectations is always a component of an economic crisis; and with a rise in expectations no authoritarian regime could find a chance to stand it for a long time.

So therefore we are probably heading to a revolution. The first time he said we were heading to a revolution was in 2001. At that time, I was very skeptical. It was rather wishful thinking, but basically he was explaining the same mechanism. You probably remember that this kind of argument of Yanukovych. What kind of revolution is that? There is no revolution because basically it is a coup d'état, because a revolution occurs when the situation is getting worse and all economic indicators show the situation is getting better. And he was right. The result, he didn't understand this mechanism of the revolution. By the way, I thought it was a new tendency, because we discuss this among my friend who is a political scientist, and he has the same thesis, and he found an article from a long time ago that basically this argument comes from Marx. Marx was the first to write that the revolution comes not from the situation getting worse, but from the situation getting better. So the better we have it, the better the chance for a revolution. As with Tocqueville, he was the first to make this point. In a sense, Kuchma and his reforms; he just triggered this kind of process, and most important, second thing is that, why didn't it happen in Russia? Because Russia probably had the same...even Russia was going ahead. Ukraine was lagging behind in economic reforms. So why did it happen in Ukraine not in Russia? There is a very good article written by a good friend of mine, the late Dmitry Furman, you probably know him, a very famous Russian historian. He died a few years ago. He wrote a very good article to explain this phenomenon. He basically said that real diversion, the real ... moment when Ukraine and Russia started going a different way was not 1991, but in 1993-94, when both countries experienced a deep political crisis. In Ukraine was because of Donbas strike and a kind of language issue, when there was a prognosis that Ukraine was headed towards a civil war like the Serbo-Croatian scenario; a belief that Ukraine will probably split in two parts. And in Russia you remember there was a crisis between the president and the parliament. So there were political, two deep political crises of different nature, but of the same kind of intensity. What Furman said, look at what happened in the Ukrainian case, one president gave up power to another rather peacefully. In relative democratic elections, he just passed his power to the second one. In Russia, the president crushed this violence. So this created some different kind of momentum. Because in Ukraine, even under Kuchma, there was relative democracy. Kuchma failed because he tried to install an authoritarian regime, but it was already too late. Because the mechanism was there. So

my explanation is because the combination of these two processes: rising in social expectations because of the current conjuncture; and second because of the relative democratic character of the Ukrainian state. Because of the regional divisions, nobody could control with one hand, so to say. Because of this combination they have these two revolutions. This didn't work in the 1990s, people didn't know about that and the situation was quite different at that time. So I would say that Kuchma is much more responsible for those revolutions, because he triggered some of these processes. With his reforms.

IR: Ok, so let's move on to the last one, which we will probably spend the most time on. You were personally involved in the Euromaidan. At what point did you...

YH: At the very beginning. Since the very beginning. Let me put it this way. I remember vividly 2009 when Yanukovych was in power, there was a situation of despair. A total despair. On the side was radicalization. That we have to embark on the wildness. And this explains why Svoboda came to power in Lviv, you may remember this. Despair combined with violence ... and I wrote an article at that time it was on *nil desperandum*, which basically says that Yanukovych is a system failure. The system is still there, the system failed for a while. It was a system mistake, but the system is still there. So most likely either Yanukovych will have to change in order to stay in power or if he wouldn't change he most likely would not have a chance to stay in Ukraine for a long time. As I say ... I was saying this would be a short period. So we would have to take this period for rethinking, recollecting, what should be done, to make a new strategy. To that extent, again, it was not my intention, because we already felt it, we started to feel it from the end of the 2000s, when we realized that it was quite early that Yushchenko would fail, that the Orange Revolution would fail. And we began thinking about the failure, the reason for failure and what to do and what kind of solution or new strategy. At that time we built, there were many movements like that, but I am talking about myself, we built this kind of think tank. It was called Univska Group and then we became Nestor Group. The basic point was for us was that the Orange Revolution failed, because the strategy was wrong. We had to come up with a new strategy. So at the time we started developing a strategy and exactly when Yanukovych came to power. We were probably the first to claim that it's not those who will win Ukraine ... to put it differently, in order to win Ukraine we have to start thinking what will be after Yanukovych. Not during Yanukovych. Because that was a short interim. Therefore we started saying that something had to be done. I was one, there were not many, but my voice was very much heard. Again, I have it in my files, in 2013 I wrote an article "Revolution is in the air". Since Yanukovych doesn't change, the system is there. Without systematic changes we'd most likely have a revolution. So what I am saying here, is that it was kind of expected. But we were just waiting for the revolution to come and therefore we looked for the Euromaidan. You may remember there were several Maidans before the Euromaidan. There was a Tax Maidan, there were Teachers' Maidan, the Yanukovych Maidan ... so were waiting to see which one would win; which one would get the momentum. Everybody was waiting in order ... the next maidan, then the next maidan, next maidan, and all of them failed. And we then went to the student maidan, which was very important. We went into the middle of Kyiv, all of us including those former students, because it was starting to get momentum and then there was frustration. At some point we realized that nothing would happen again...

AR: So would you say that you were of the opinion that since Yanukovych came back to power there would be no other solution to change than a mass protest, a revolution?

YH: In the sense that if Yanukovych wouldn't change. Because there was such a notion promulgated by several experts, especially Russian experts, that Yanukovych was very teachable, you could teach him to change. He's not smart, but he could be smart, if you teach him. Therefore, especially when Yanukovych has decided not to sign the European agreement, so this kind of movement... That probably, probably...

AR: Did you think that he would sign it?

YH: We didn't know, we didn't know it for sure. There were rumors. We were hoping very much that he would sign it ... and we believed that this could serve as a kind of antidote to a revolution. Then he would have become a national hero. So many of us were expecting ... and the Euromaidan happened because the expectations were so high. He just turned it on, in one night practically, until the very morning of the date, nobody knew whether he would sign or not. I know from people who were in Vilnius, from this milieu, Azarov was not sure. He was shocked, he was prime minister then, Azarov was shocked. Personally he was shocked, he was pale, that Yanukovych didn't sign it. So the thing is, what happened there, we went to Kyiv and then we realized that nothing would happen there. Because the student revolution was very quickly ... it was beautiful but it was fading away, it was dying. And I remember that somebody gave us a call. Probably it was Friday, I don't remember the dates nowadays, but you could easily check. It was the day before they beat the students.

IR: That was the 30th of November?

YH: Yes, the 30th probably. So we got a call that we better leave with our students. That something bad might happen then, if you want to be safe, but it is not just something... somebody called us. Again, it is kind of a complicated story because there were some kind of political games with the beginning of Maidan. We know these kind of stories, maybe if we have an occasion you can ask me, but I will tell you later...

AR: So you received a warning, basically?

YH: A warning that something is bound to happen. If you have students, and you are responsible for them, you better take them away, I mean to Lviv. But it is not the main meaning ... the meaning was that the Maidan was dying. There was no momentum. It was nice, but nothing would come of it. So we evacuated all the students, we took a bus and we heading back home. And on the same night we returned home we got the message that the students were severely beaten. And on the Sunday after, everyone went to Kyiv. And there was a million demonstration, it was a feeling you could not express. I have never been in a crowd that has one million people. It was such a feeling, it was irrational. And all the people were very friendly, this kind of revolution, as you know ... but what I am saying here is that there was something strange here with these Euromaidan developments, and I will tell you later because later on I was working with the Poroshenko team and the experts on security. Somebody was playing a game – separate from Maidan and Yanukovych. There was always a third side. We presume we know who it was ... every time Maidan went down, they provoke something to get it... I believe it was a political game, again not on behalf of the Maidan. As I was told basically, Russia's strategy for Ukraine had been elaborated already in the Kremlin and accepted in 2009 right after the Georgian war. And the tactics were that if Ukraine would move to the West ... Okay, to give you some ... do we still have time?

AR: Yes, of course

YH: You may remember that or not, but already during the Yushchenko time there was a discussion by some experts - to what extent Russia was willing to leave Ukraine to go free? We were sure that Russia would never allow Ukraine to join NATO even as a theoretical possibility. But the question was whether Russia would let Ukraine join European Union in any sense. Most would say no to the first option, yes to the second option. But there was one expert, Alexander Kagan, he was then in Vienna, he was saying no, you have an illusion. Moscow wouldn't say yes to European integration as well. He probably had his sources. And then we came to realize that this strategy was accepted in 2009 and it basically said Ukraine couldn't make any move to the West. It would start a Ukrainian scenario, which basically means dividing Ukraine along the axis Kharkiv-Odesa. Which means the "Huntington" kind of clash, with Russian speakers joining Russia either as an autonomous Novorossiia, or joining Russia. The most vulnerable place was not in Donbas, not even Crimea. The most vulnerable places were Kharkiv and Odesa. Because it was the industrial core of Ukraine and the black sea shore. Without this, they could say the rest of Ukraine could go wherever it wants, into hell. Because it would be just agricultural and small, it wouldn't matter. So, this was ... it was Plan B. Plan A in this strategy was to replace Yanukovych with somebody else who would have a much more human and liberal face, but at the same time be much more loyal to Moscow. Because Yanukovych was not a good enough protagonist for Moscow. Yanukovych was not loyal. He hated Putin, and Putin intensively disliked Yanukovych. We know that for sure. As a matter of fact, Yanukovych never let the Russian companies come to Donbas. He was praising himself that he was really a Ukrainian nationalist, because he never let any kind of Russian business come to Ukraine, to Donbas. So they had a Plan A to replace Yanukovych with somebody else, a nice guy, by the next elections, 2015. And Plan B, if something like the Orange Revolution would happen again, then Plan B would enter – this kind of division: Plan A; Plan B. They had planned with [Viktor] Medvedchuk, and this was the game with the Klyuyev brothers [Andriy and Serhiy]. They were on this side, they were realizing this type of scenario, Klyuyev and Medvedchuk. And therefore the, I will go this far, to make such a declaration. Because the story was that most likely that it was a Klyuyev and Medvedchuk initiative, every time on the Maidan, every time there was a provocation on the Maidan, to raise this kind of – because they wanted to destabilize the situation for Putin...for Yanukovych to go down, and to replace him with somebody else. To put it differently, I will tell you from the beginning, as a matter of fact, this is the story which is kept secret. You know that the first call for the Maidan came from [Mustafa] Nanyem. It was manipulated. It was [Serhiy] Levochkin who called. Levochkin. Because Levochkin was losing power to the Klyuyev brothers at that time. After Yanukovych refused to sign the agreement, Levochkin came into disgrace. He was in conflict with Klyuyev, so Levochkin made a call to Nanyem and said that you have to do something, you have to make a call for the student protests. At the same Levochkin called the rector of the Kyiv Polytechnic institute and he assured security for his students if his students would go to the Maidan. So there was some play there, and I believe to a certain extent, Yanukovych was a hostage to this play as well. Because there was the Yanukovych line, and then there was the Russian line, the Putin line. They wouldn't go together. They were two different stories, there was manipulation. But basically together they wanted de-escalation of the Maidan.

IR: So you don't think that Yanukovych was told this in Sochi. Because I asked this to Aleksander Kwasniewski if he was surprised by Yanukovych not signing, and he said yes and no. He said in a way, since the meeting with Putin in Sochi, because he was coming here with Cox, and he said that and before even in Polish press he had quite a good assessment of Yanukovych as Yushchenko was someone who never kept his promises...

YH: I remember that, yeah...

IR: And he said he felt this way until that meeting. And after that, he felt they were losing contact more and more...

YH: We realized that. We knew that fact because everyone was saying that they never seen Yanukovych that much afraid, that pale as after he left that meeting with Putin. Putin made him a kind of threat...

AR: Do you think it was this Plan B?

YH: Most likely they showed him the strategy. Most likely they revealed to him the strategy. What was really in store for him...so he was very terrified. And therefore ... but we still didn't know, well we got the signal from people who knew him in Kyiv that something strange happened to him. He was very terrified. But we don't know to what extent he was really going to follow this line or not. Probably Kwasniewski would know better because he was seeing him directly, but I can confirm this kind of story.

IR: He said they lost contact almost, in conversations and...

YH: The thing is you have to realize the character of Yanukovych. Which was widely known. He was a coward. He was extremely cowardly and came with personal security. And they played with him and therefore he left ...

IR: Well he was guilty from the past and maybe that also ...

YH: We don't know what happened there, maybe there were some psychological moments. He looked very much macho, but he was a vulnerable coward inside. He was very much ... terrified, fear... I give you one example on how it was manipulated. This is a very important example here. You may remember that sometime in January, even before the laws, the famous law, they ... Yanukovych called the leader of our church – Shevchuk – and Borys Gudziak, who is a bishop, to come to visit him. He had a very important meeting with them. And what happened there? Yanukovych's grandson called him and said that he saw on YouTube a Greek Catholic priest calling to kill you. And there was something on YouTube, some sort of meeting in the forest, with a Greek Catholic priest calling to fight against Yanukovych to the utmost. So he invited Shevchuk, just to say "What's going on?" What was the official position of the church? Well, it turned out that this was a YouTube video that was three years old and this priest was long-ago fired from the church. But someone found this YouTube and put it on the web and made sure that Yanukovych's grandson would see it, because they love each other, and gave a signal to Yanukovych. So you see it was a manipulation there. There was a lot of manipulations. So I believe that Yanukovych at that time was losing his control of his power. But on the second hand, he tried to hang on stronger and he refused to compromise. I remember very vividly, because I was on the Poroshenko team and I believe this was probably the best time for Poroshenko in his life. The revolution transformed everyone, including him. Because Poroshenko did everything to reach a compromise to avoid bloodshed. He would negotiate with anybody, even Yanukovych himself. Since Poroshenko was a very strong negotiator, Yanukovych deliberately kept him outside of the negotiations. So it was just the three of them, but not Poroshenko. And Poroshenko was trying to get in touch with everybody, including the son of Yanukovych, to say that you have to stop this bloodshed, you cannot reach the point of bloodshed. Because this is the point of no return. And Yanukovych strictly refused that. They had no compromise. They had a feeling that a compromise would be manipulated by the West and they could deal with that, to the very end. But then there was always this third source...

AR: About this third source, do you think it was also connected with Russia or was it...

YH: I believe it was a Putin game...to get rid of Yanukovych and replace him with someone else. You know here is what we call the Kirgizstan scenario. If you know Kirgizstan. They have a new president who is very much liberal but much more loyal to... actually in this scenario, Yanukovych would get protection in Moscow. So this was part of the scenario, he would lose power but get protection in Moscow. This was already discussed at that time. There was some information that was leaking, but he was probably not aware of what was at stake. So the thing is what helped or rescued the Maidan was that whole scenario was timed for the 2015 elections. They didn't expect something to happen before that, it was too early. They were preparing for the next year and the Euromaidan caught them unprepared. And then Sochi Olympics and actually you remember that there were signals that they had until the end of the Olympics. So in a sense, to save Maidan. And I know because the Poroshenko team knew it. Since the middle of January they knew that the main problem in Ukraine was not anymore Yanukovych. The main problem in Ukraine was the impending Russian invasion. It was very clear.

AR: Even before the end of the Maidan?

YH: It was the middle of January, they were already sure. They wouldn't say it explicitly, well they allowed me to tell it on the TV; I made a reportage which kind of hinted that Yanukovych is no longer the problem. There was a much stronger problem. You can see it on YouTube, I was talking on the street ...

AR: This whole time you were in Kyiv? Or back and forth...?

YH: I was back and forth, like everybody. Because there was this unwritten rule, you have to take a night shift. Like three nights, then you go back and then again and again, we were shifting each other, so like three days a week, I don't really remember, maybe I have it in my emails you could have a look, but basically I went to the night shift as everybody else. We had an expression which I like very much, to work as a pixel.

Because the Maidan was like a big picture, and you had to work as a pixel. The most important was the night time, because there could be an attack at night time so at the nighttime they wanted the maximum number of people at the nighttime. So we get large numbers. During the day we slept, and at night we went to work as a pixel because of the possibility of attack. After December 10th there was an attack and then no one could expect what could happen during the night. And it was unbelievably cold! It was so cold, you couldn't stand on Maidan. First of all, alcohol was strictly forbidden and it was kept. Coffee and tea will keep you warm for like 20 minutes maximum. It was freezing cold ... to death. I didn't know what to do, and then this lady told me a very simple secret. You use what's called ... *gorczyca* [in Polish]

IR: A spice, yes?

YH: This is mustard...

AR: Mustard seed...

YH: Yes, you put mustard seed in the socks.

IR: Really?

AR: In your socks?

YH: In your socks, and it helps you.

AR: Really?

YH: The only way to stand... I didn't know it at that time, but they knew it already because they basically...and this is the good thing about the Euromaidan, it was extremely imaginative. This is common knowledge in social sciences that during a time of crisis, people are very inventive. Therefore if you have to stay on the Maidan at the nighttime you have to put mustard seed in your socks. It is the only way to keep warm. It was unbelievably cold, you know. And then I was there and I came upon a friend of mine, who was a leader of the *tovarystvo leva*, Ihor Hryniv [27.29] and at that time he was a close associate of Poroshenko. He said to me "what are you doing, it is stupid for you to stand there. Let's go to work on real stuff, work as an expert. We are writing texts analyzing things." So they take me from the Maidan and let me to the office. Poroshenko was like 500 meters from the Maidan. Near Verkhovna Rada, by the way, quite near Verkhovna Rada. So then we went to work there during the day and we went to the Maidan during the night, or vice-versa. And we worked very intensively we were discussing very much, analyzing different things. Poroshenko used to come and tell us the new stories, such as like a brainstorming all the time. So first I spent time on Maidan, and then I moved to this office. To work as a kind of speechwriter, or whatever. And also analytical kind of things. So I got to know some stories that not that many people knew on the Maidan. And I had to kind of keep it secret, because I could not tell the story openly. To the public. It was kept secretly.

AR: When was the shift, when did you start working for Poroshenko?

YH: I believe after the second half of December...uh January. The second half of January.

AR: Okay.

YH: And again, I really appreciated what they were doing. They were doing really expert things. Like they were calculating or estimating the possibility of a *berkut* attack. What they were getting, and information, like how many medical leaves the *berkut* people would take on that day. Or what they had as supply for a day; what was their daily supply. Because they were calculating the kind of resources. They knew the movements. What kind of *berkut* was coming. So they were ... we were actually expecting some kind of attack when the Crimean *berkut* came. Because there were something that was expanded, they were more ready for the attack. We have this kind of expression. And then a very important thing happened, I believe it was already at the end of January. We got the first signal that resources had started to extinguish. That the *berkut* were getting a two-days ration for three days. Not three-days ration for three days, but two-days.

IR: So that started giving you hope?

YH: It meant that something was going on, and actually this was corroborated later by their interviews. Some of the *berkut* had said they were actually starving at some point. They had no place to sleep. They were irritated because they were undernourished...

AR: Right, so the question is that it was a forced irritation to ...

YH: Well, we didn't know, but we expected that the resources were extinguished on the part of Yanukovych. And therefore we expected they may attack. Because...

AR: They were running out...

YH: And time was running out. So what we were sure was that the timing was working for us, until the Sochi Olympics.

AR: Did you have sources inside the government that was providing information? Or it was all based on analysis...

YH: All based on analysis. By the way, there were always contacts between the two sides. It never stopped. They tried to negotiate with the others. Some of the news was coming... and they were terrified what was coming, they remember the Maidan and they knew difference between the Maidan and Yanukovych. You probably know that ... and it was probably Kwasniewski who was the first to tell in *Gazeta Wyborcza* after

the Orange Revolution ... that the only man who didn't want compromise and was willing to resort to violence was Yanukovych. During this type of negotiations. If not for Kuchma... there'd be bloodshed.

IR: Yes

YH: So there was already a warning. That Ukraine ... Yanukovych never yields and he is very much open to violence. And we knew that. We knew that fact.

IR: Yeah, he [Kwasniewski] told me that he [Yanukovych] even yelled at them - why did you even come here, these elections were honest, it was only 10 percent forged.

YH: Only 10 percent! [laughs]

AR: Honest enough...

YH: So I wish that somebody could write this other story, the story of the Maidan. If I may wish, if you could interview Ihor Hryniv, I am not sure if he will tell you the stories because he is kind of obliged and still very close to the Poroshenko milieu, but there are a lot of stories that were not told. It was a very strange game; very strange game. And I hate to say in that sense, the West was helpless. The West was useless. They didn't know what was going on, they didn't have a clue what was going on.

AR: How would you then assess the role of the West? Because there were a lot of politicians showing up on Maidan.

YH: It was symbolic, but only of symbolic importance. For people standing they could see they had some support. But I would say the difference between the first and second Maidan, the people were very, how to say, ironic about the West.

AR: Ukrainians?

YH: Ukrainians.

IR: But maybe the Ukrainians became more empowered...

YH: Not because of empowerment because... look, it is very simple. Everybody was afraid. The main feeling was fear. We went to Maidan because of the fear. We stood on Maidan because of the fear. We knew that anything could happen at any moment. Therefore we went en mass, to prevent the fear, to fight the fear. You probably know this, probably someone told you, that the safest place at that time was Maidan. You just couldn't sit watching TV or screaming at the internet because you couldn't find your place. You would die from the stress. Unless you went to Maidan, you became calmed. But on Maidan you also felt terrified. Again, let me put it this way. If there was one feeling that you could use to describe all the three Maidans including the first revolution, it is fear. It is constant fear, a feeling of insecurity. If when we go to the streets we will be arrested, repressed, killed, whatever – anything could happen to us. It was a feeling of despair. In a sense it was heroism, but having us fight our own fear. This is what made people go to the street. You have to remember it. And in this sense, if you want to have any kind of support which could provide minimal security, we were looking for the West, for Brussels, for Washington to send any message that they would stand and not allow the people to resort to violence. And they never said it, they never said it strictly. And people were so frustrated on the Maidan that I would say after Yanukovych, Putin and the three guys who were supposedly leading the revolution, the West was the fourth most...

IR: most hated?

YH: mocking-stock, on the Maidan. The Maidan mocked everybody, everyone. The West was very much mocked.

AR: I remember they were very frustrated with the expression “concern”...

YH: Concern, yes exactly. But again, an exception, Poland was very important. Poland gave quite a different signal. And having Polish politicians on the Maidan was very important. Poland was sending quite different signals and therefore they had a difference between Poland and the West. In the sense that Poland was not the West, in a good sense. Not the “stupid West” but the normal West, so to say. The position of Poland was much appreciated at that time.

IR: And that was regardless of what political option was represented?

YH: They didn't care, they cared about security.

IR: So, [Jarosław] Kaczyński was just as well received as [Jacek] Saryusz-Wolski...

YH: Without a doubt. There were no divisions and the people just had no clue. It was only among some of You have to realize that Poland is rather unknown in this country. I hate to say it. I used to say this type of metaphor, judging by the mass media presence in Ukraine, Poland looks like a very small country somewhere in the near neighborhood of Mexico. We just had a very small knowledge of what was going on in Poland. Everybody knows about Russia, sometimes Belarus, but not Poland. With the exception of here [Lviv], because here people cared. But in Kyiv or some other places, so therefore it was very much different. What time is it now?

AR: Twenty after eleven...

YH: Okay we have a little time.

AR: Maybe we should look at how the protest ended and what happened in the immediate afterwards, what are some of the memories that you have as, we had this visit with Sikorski, Steinmeier and the

French foreign minister... there were negotiations to end the bloodshed and Yanukovych immediately fled. What were some of the immediate actions behind the scenes...

IR: Andrew Wilson had said he just went to protect his wealth, that's his theory...

YH: I don't know. Really nobody knew what was going on...my guess would be, it is a wild guess, that it was this third force wanted to go to the extreme. I don't really believe it was Yanukovych. I am not sure, but given the previous record of what was happening on Maidan that maybe it was also this part. Or maybe a combination of the factors. I don't know. But look, they forced him to move out. Again, the same signal. I won't tell, because it would be a kind of diversion...just the feeling in Lviv. I wasn't at that time in Kyiv. I went to my mother because, it is kind of a stupid story, we had a cat and that cat died. We had to bury him. He was old, it was cold, and it took a few days. I went there and we got some messages that something was going on. And I returned to Lviv and you just could imagine the willingness of the people to go to Kyiv. There were lines. And the buses were very limited. And they said strictly only young or really physical. Women were crying. I know some friends of mine who were women who called me, trying to use my connections to let them get onto the buses. But the message was very strict. Only those who were young, males who could protect... and then we got the first messages about the killings. And the first message we got was the killing of a few students of mine, and my colleague. And Bohdan. You can't describe it. It was beyond the horror. I remember I was trying to calm down a good friend of mine who was just crying and was hysterical. I was basically trying to say that this is the end. Not in the sense that this is the last fact before the failure. Because I was saying that this was *their* end. But an end which came at a cost. But I remember this feeling of despair very strongly. And then came a signal, very strongly, that it ended very abruptly. Two days and that was it. That was it and you know then nothing was going on. But still we were expecting that Putin would do something. The next move was Putin's. That was what we were expecting and that's what happened. So what happened was that one fear was super-imposed by another fear. It was stronger. Because now you feel this is the war coming. A real war. This was the feeling I believe until the summer, until the end of the summer of 2014, that every day you start opening the internet to see whether the war has started or not. This was the main feeling. You go to sleep with this thought and then you start the day with this thought. I also explained that ... and this helps explain why Poroshenko was chosen. Because Poroshenko looked at that time like the most reliable person who could really provide security for the country. Not Tymoshenko, not Klitschko. The only serious politician. They don't like him actually. But it was like the price for security, that he would provide security. Because he was a strong negotiator and those kind of things, it was like that. Not because of an intense like for him. Because of this feeling of security. Fear and security. So, again I am saying that the main driving forces for the two Maidans was this kind of fear. And I remember again, this very vivid image – a friend of mine who has come from a Kyiv family, he is now living in Lviv, but a Kyiv family which was a very kind of communist one. And his father died a few years ago and he is only staying with his mother, his older mother. And he felt that he had ... the first Maidan ... that he had to go to Maidan. He had no choice. He went to bid farewell to her. And he was expecting that she would start yelling at him. And she sat down and said to him, "Go, if you don't go, who will go there?" because of this feeling of despair. And I remember the same feeling in Kyiv. When people started to come to Maidan in Kyiv, during the second half, it was mostly businessmen and middle class that felt if they won't go there, then the situation is entirely lost. So this is my theory, on one side are the high expectations; on the other the feeling of fear which was the driving force for this kind of development.

Okay starting from the Granite Revolution as well, but mostly from the second revolution. I know some of the stories from the Granite Revolution, but I won't tell them, because they are not my stories. I heard them from the interviews like yours. You will have to contact these people but there are some different stories, some pleasant stories and some unpleasant stories. But still that's

a different story. But again, I see, I don't see this quite strong connection between this first and the second Maidan. It is rather a disconnection. There is more discontinuity than continuity in it. It's like two parts of two different stories from two eras, I would say.

IR: And this sense of despair and high expectations, they haven't been met, these expectations. Are you worried they might lead to more political changes?

YH: Exactly, this is what I am saying. My guess, nobody can really tell, I wouldn't probably say that I am some kind of prophet, but my take is that you have a combination of both. Social expectation is not enough. You probably won't have another happening like Maidan. You have to have fear. I don't see so far in this situation the utmost fear. Terrifying things. If this such a factor would emerge, or be provoked, then maybe people would come to Maidan. Because this factor is now missing. People are frustrated, distressed, but there is no fear. This is a different kind of condition.

IR: Do you think there is less fear because Ukraine now has an army in the East and the volunteers...

YH: It is an existential fear. It is not something you can explain, you just feel it. I remember this feeling during the Maidan. You have to feel it. That something terrible is going to happen. And then, the Tax Maidan or Language Maidan didn't happen because it didn't have this kind of component. You just go to protest, because the other side is winning. And therefore it was easy for them to suppress because there were not these kinds of things. To have a little, mass event. I put it differently, I give it as a historian, a kind of speculation. But since Ukraine has been such a territory of the bloodshed and genocides throughout the centuries... the main feeling for Ukrainians is security. They want to have security. Therefore the main driving force is security. If you protect, and provide this kind of security, they may slightly hate you, but they tolerate you – and vice versa. If you provide the feeling of fear, utmost fear, you could easily have that kind of combination. Let me put it this way. There is no secret about it, that there have been a few attempts of new Maidans, you know that, after the Maidan. And with the participation of the FSB. It's proven, it is very easy to prove. And they try to manipulate it, but they have never succeeded. And exactly because of this missing element. I am telling you this, because everyone is telling the heroic story. Which is basically true, but it is heroism about fighting out your fear. It is not about your enemy. It's fighting your fear; which drives you to heroism.

AR: Thank you very much

YH: With pleasure.