

Interview with Dawid Wildstein (DW). Interviewer: Przemysław Pazik (PP). Place of record: Warsaw.

PP: My first question refers to how you got involved in the events in Ukraine?

DW: Easy thing. I had already been there at the time of the Orange Revolution, even though not as much as a journalist, as a volunteer, and I remember those events. And I was expecting, even though I did not suspect that things would develop the way they did, I was suspecting that it would be a fascinating event.

PP: So how did it happen that you took part in the Orange Revolution?

DW: I saw what was going on. I had some savings, I packed my things and went there.

PP: And what motivations did you have?

DW: None.

PP: Curiosity?

DW: In the case of the Orange [Revolution] yes, curiosity.

PP: What did you gain from watching the Orange Revolution? Whom did you reach out to...

DW: I reached out to a small group of young Ukrainian volunteers and I spent a few days with them in their flat. There was a kind of a small headquarters of their organisation. I took part in the demonstrations. I do not know... I do not remember much of what I gained out of it. I remember that it was a fascinating event, and even more fascinating later as it got parcelled out into all kind of arrangements of all sorts.

PP: Talking about the Orange [revolution], how did you get contact information to those volunteers?

DW: I met them there...

PP: So you just went there...?

DW: Yes.

PP: And what were their names?

DW: Oh I forgot. I am sorry...

PP: No problem. But who were they? Was this university youth?

DW: These were students.

PP: Do you remember of which university?

DW: No... meaning I think they were from Kyiv as the Orange Revolution, I believe, did not get such large crowds from western Ukraine, they were probably more from Kyiv, but I could be wrong.

PP: I understand. So now, with this memory of the Orange [Revolution] you are coming to the Maidan, or being there earlier, do you have some contacts or are you just going there, sort of shooting in the dark? How was it?

DW: I went there, sort of shooting in the dark but when there I found out that there were was somebody called Paweł Bobołowicz, a guy whom I barely knew before, meaning maybe talked to him for two minutes. He was very nice and we stuck together throughout the whole Maidan. And he had lived, as a matter of fact, for many years in Ukraine. And he had these contacts.

PP: What kind of contacts?

DW: With basically everyone. Starting with politically involved people, ordinary volunteers, and – I do not know how to call it – the opposition that wanted changes and because in Ukraine this is not structuralised – the political representation is a formula which this opposition at times accepts to enter any kind of political agenda in institutions. And there never, and especially after the

Orange [Revolution] much trust. Thus there was a group of different people whom Paweł had met while living for years in Ukraine.

PP: And how could you define your activity at the Maidan? If you were to group them?

DW: Journalistic.

PP: And how long did you stay there for?

DW: I do not remember. Altogether, I was at the Maidan from December until its closing down, and then after the victory I spent two months over there. But this was kind of a patchwork; once I spent there three weeks, then two weeks...

PP: And how did you move around within the Maidan? Did you have a guide, or did you simply know someone there?

DW: No. Ukrainians were very open. They were very happy that media were interested. There was an unbelievable positive attitude towards Poles. It was perceived – not correctly as a matter of fact – that Poland wanted to help as a state institution. And correctly that a certain indeed – how to call it – community of experience with Russians as well as an oppressive system causes that we are here partners, brothers, and this caused that new contacts could be established in five minutes. And indeed such real ones.

PP: And if you were to look at it more structurally, how did things look there? Was there a press centre?

DW: There was such a thing as; they took over the Trade Unions' building the so-called Maidan press centre was set up there. But the word press centre does not do justice in this case as there were a few rooms which served as the meeting points for the fighters, there was a hospital, a food

delivery area, there were many floors.... And regarding to the press centre – I happened to have slept there for eight to nine days, non-stop, meaning I spent nights there because it was cold outside and leaving the Maidan made no sense and the dynamics of change was so fast that by leaving one could lose much. So we simply slept under those tables, or in a corner. I remember that I once woke up next to Ruslana. Such, more or less, was the situation.

PP: And did information spread? Both within Maidan and, on the other hand, in social media? How did you see it as, on the one hand, a participant and on the other hand a side observer, a journalist – how did you see this Maidan “on the ground” and Maidan in the cyberspace?

DW: From the very beginning the cyberspace was a war zone in every aspect, but it seems to me that the social media – just like in many such situations today – were truly fundamental. They would gather, through social media, and I myself wrote a lot, together with my friends, on social media, and not only for press. Also later, when I talked to people who were observing, they would often say that they were observing more some specific profiles, internet sites than tv.

PP: But was there an attempt to coordinate communication through social media?

DW: They tried to co-ordinate a bit, but rather not.

PP: And what attempts do you remember?

DW: Setting up official profiles and delivering information through them, but at the same time everybody was feeding them on their own.

PP: Were there any insitutions or people who were the faces of all that?

DW: Yes, they were. What comes to my mind, for example, is the profile of Paweł Babołowicz, both the one on Twitter and Facebook. It was fundamental. He was providing information all the

time. But not only him, I would also say that our profiles were like this too; Wojciech Mucha's too, those of people who were there. I am, of course, talking about the Polish perspective. On the Maidan also the new quasi-journalistic stars were being created. These were people connected with espressoTV, people connected with smaller media, who – through the Internet and its range – later became famous. In the same way, this famous show of Maślankiewicz – which was criticised by many but which I consider to have been great – where he is asking the Berkut guy why was he shooting at the Ukrainians? And of course television somehow broadcast it but it was the real millions, really millions of visits and likes, this was the effect of social media.

PP: How did you see the impact of what was going on in social media on what was taking place at the Maidan?

DW: There nothing was going on, they were co-ordinating everything through Facebook. With the whole difference – when you go for a beer, you don't always call, clearly. They were in touch, but this is normal. But I do not understand what you have in mind. Maidan had its own dynamics, it was mainly decided on by – I am not saying that it was not active – but it was mainly decided on by quite strong and convulsive reactions of the authorities. And this was its dynamics. As what did the social media have to do with the fact that at a certain moment two person were shot at Hrushchevskiy Street? Maybe I am not understanding your question?

PP: Did some kind of interest of the social media translate into a larger material support, more care packages, or less?

DW: I cannot estimate that, I have no data.

PP: But maybe from your memory...

DW: It seems to me that there is completely no contradiction, as this was a form of communication and thanks to that there was an element of media activity, which allowed for showing what was at stake. Let me give you an example: when they killed these people, when they started killing for the first time – I happened to be there – they started to broadcast it right away on the spot, call their editorial offices, their tv stations. But social media often are faster than traditional media.

PP: I have one more question regarding what you could observe. On the one hand, we have an image of the events, but there also was some existence. Did you see some kind of social life institutions over there? Something that would allow for longer existence than one time upheaval?

DW: Yes. Many of them. There were food distribution stations, places where medical supplies were distributed, people also had to spend time together; sometimes in one tent, sometimes in another. There was a very strong ban on alcohol, which was really strictly controlled. However, when they started to kill and burn, then alcohol also got in. But Maidan had its own fluctuations – at times there were more people, at other times fewer. At times it seemed that everything was over with, that there are a mere 500 people at the Maidan, while later thousands would show up because somebody had been killed. A sinusoid.

PP: But maybe you remember what this organisation of meals and medicine distribution look like? Did you have a chance to see it?

DW: Yes. In the beginning of the Maidan it had to be sponsored with money that came from outside Maidan. As these things require a lot of money and these points were already there. As much as I can say they could not have appeared spontaneously, but with time the autonomous structures for maintaining Maidan appeared, and since then it did not need this money. As indeed,

one could see that people themselves were bringing food, the volunteer movement in this regards was very large. People were coming, cooking, this social assistance was so large that it did not need what was in the beginning.

PP: And these people who co-ordinated it – was this a place breeding new leaders or the leaders where coming from somewhere else?

DW: This was, most often, a place where new leaders were created, depending on the situation because, what was the most important at the Maidan was that Maidan recognised that some people will be a political representation of the Maidan, but still did not trust them. The famous whistling at the three leaders. Yatseniuk Yatsenyuk, Klichko and Tiahnybok – it was not easy for them at the Maidan. One scene of that. The distance of the Maidan towards its political representation that is also fascinating. It showed that it had to lose in some sense. And yet, this ambiguity of dynamics between external institutions which in some sense used the Maidan and the Maidan itself was very clear.

PP: And what was the political life like? What discussions were there?

DW: Quite soon the main topic was Maidan's self-defence, meaning people who were guarding it, who were training others to defend the barricades, defending against the police attacks. The truth is that these people became such leaders of political forces, plus of course the artists. For example Ruslana. And in addition, it was mainly, Maidan's self-defence. And also Pravy Sektor at one point, but it was politically pushed out.

PP: And what did this pushing out look like?

DW: Simply, some people did not want to be together with Pravy Sektor, which was very ideological – the self-defence was not. And at a certain moment, despite the fact that Pravy

Sektor entered the self-defence structures – they turned against it as they had their own forces. And at most the Pravy Sektor were people of the self-defence but did not get any high level positions. And different people, for example “Storm” who later joined the Aidar battalion... true it happened that he had traded earlier a bit with weapons and was a body guard, all in all actually not, but he stayed in those structures and many people like him indeed became the commanders of the sotnias and it was them who were setting up the tone.

PP: And what about the artists? What was Maidan’s cultural life like?

DW: It was omnipresent. Maidan immediately created its own artefacts; these were paintings, graffiti, shield decorations, or even decorations of the area of the city that was occupied by Maidan activists. Plus the artists joined in and were at the stage. At a certain moment when one of the buildings was taken over – I do not remember its name – at Hrusheveskiy Street, next to the stadium, the whole one floor there was used for camping and squatting; there people were painting; there was the revolutionary expression, which also had to have an image in cultural emanations.

PP: But were there any attempts to organise it, institutionalise?

DW: The artists did not, but the self-defence was – clearly – organised. When it comes to the artists, maybe there was such a thing, but I personally did not see it. In addition, of course every group, which occupies a certain space for some time, creates, willingly or not, some kind of structures on some kind of basis, but for sure this was not formalised.

PP: And when it comes to social life? Discussion? Were there any kinds of press? E-press?

DW: There were always discussions, meetings, however quite soon it took the form of a defence dynamic. Such was the need. But there were, all the time, in those occupied buildings, places where you could talk with the leaders of those and those and learn to this or that one, or that one if you wanted to help. And one more thing from this social expression – as in Ukraine there are many homeless animals (the infamous massacres during the [2012] Euro and so on, but both before and now there are many of them) an institution that was taking care of homeless animals appeared at the Maidan; there was a tent and a guy who took care of it and was helping these animals, feeding them and so on..

PP: Do you remember his last name?

DW: No, and shame on me because that was a friend with whom I worked on a report but I can try to find it, but unfortunately I do not remember it.

PP: Moving on to your assessment of the Maidan, you mentioned that Maidan did not trust its politicians. If we were to enter deeper into this relationship between politicians, first of all Ukrainian and people of the Maidan and then Western politicians, including those from Poland and the Maidan. How did you see the building of these relations and the perception of these politicians and their speeches.

DW: This was also fascinating in Maidan as a social phenomenon. I travelled to many places, not that I am any kind of an expert, but I saw various weird situations, let's call them of a conflict nature, but I have never seen such a revolution which would be pessimistic and not trusting. First of all – it is clear that these people at times had faith – there were some eruptions of enthusiasm, but more often – however, please take it into account that I came there after they beat these students, I do not know what it looked like in the beginning, whether it was a singing Maidan.

Then, when I came there it was still singing, but they were somehow lost, people did not know what was going on, there were beatings. And I can only repeat that it was a pessimistic revolution, as indeed for many of these people it was an attempt to exist with the awareness that possibly nothing will come out of it but they nonetheless had to.... Plus this that “yes we have to have these politicians but in truth they are just a bit better.... Thieves”. This is how they would describe it.

PP: And what about those politicians who would come from abroad? From Poland or the West?

DW: That was something completely different. Meaning, this indeed gave them faith. This faith, which is now, I think, completely destroyed. There indeed was such a faith that the European Union, that this West, is a decision-maker and is ready to defend this freedom, these values that it is speaks about. This eruption of optimism and gigantic trust were very visible when they were coming. But this ended long time ago.

PP: And do you remember which speech was well-received and which was poorly received?

DW: For sure there was much enthusiasm was expressed towards Kaczyński’s speech, but I also remember enthusiasm toward Saryusz-Wolski. I do not remember very well the reception of Buzek’s speech but he delivered such a speech that indeed it could have been interpreted in many different ways, also pro-Yanukovich. But Saryusz-Wolski of the Civic Platform was very strong in his message. But each, indeed, visit of an important politician caused joy among them. (...) Saakashvili was there too, of course.

PP: And what was the reception not that much of visits, but rather of what the EU was doing, or its member-states? The mediation attempts?

DW: In the beginning it was very positive, but at a certain point they noticed that it had no effects. It is worth mentioning the war here. These days I go to the front and this pessimism and disappointment there are gigantic. At that time it was much smaller, they felt that things were not working out, that nobody was listening to them, that somebody else was playing them, but there was some kind of hope. And those deaths, please remember, these deaths were not numerous. They were more individual. But the moment of the first massacre, meaning the Mariyinsky Park, two days later there were snipers, and three days later the Maidan won. At that time they already knew that they could only count on themselves, but this was before what the war later gave them, meaning the knowledge that they [the West] do not care about them at all...

PP: I am also interested in the assessment of those December decisions of the EU, that is not signing the Association Agreement.

DW: I can repeat it one more time – I understand that this is not about my political views but the reaction of these people – they were happy, they did not trust their own politicians, but they trusted the West and this was gradually being lost, but it did not manage to get lost completely, as it happened during the war. That is why, this biggest eruption of murders was sealed by Yanukovich's escape and again a short euphoria.

PP: Meaning the war and occupation of Crimea that was this moment...

DW: This was the moment when they stopped trusting the West. In my view yes.

PP: To what extent were you able to learn about Maidan outside Kyiv? Were you also somewhere else?

DW: No, I worked only there. And I stuck to that. But the truth is that one of the reasons for which they did not decide to go to full war and a pacification was this – even though evidently many things did not work out there. I think that the main element of Maidan’s victory – even though it quickly got dispersed into small bits and pieces, into blood and war – the main reason was the failure of the Party of Regions, this was fundamental that they felt that Yanukovych was escaping even though he did not have many places to escape to, the game was supposed to be different but they got scared by this signal and they all started packing up their stuff. This was this moment of victory. But the fact that Maidan was finding its strongholds in different cities and became a revolution, even if of a minority, but visible and one that was a strong element, this also was a reason of support....

PP: And did the news about protests similar to Maidan or supporting Maidan which took place either in Ukraine or other countries, were they reading the Maidan?

DW: Yes they did, here indeed the social media were fundamental so the transfer of information was quite good.

PP: What was the reaction to the events in Ukraine? Was it a one-sided “everybody supports Maidan” or was Maidan also supporting protests in other places?

DW: I think that those smaller Maidans were supporting the main Maidan. I do not remember, for example, the situation in which Maidan would send somebody from Maidan to be in charge somewhere else. But quite often resources were sent to the Kyiv Maidan.

PP: Do you remember any concrete situations, events?

DW: I remember that the AutoMaidan coordinated its activities with other AutoMaidans. I remember that people were being sent by smaller Maidans to support the main Maidan. To what extent it was all controlled, I do not know. I was also more involved in direct reporting than doing analyses, so I was not so interested in these issues.

PP: Now I would like to move to a series of questions referring to how you assess this revolution as a political process. You mentioned a cleavage: people vs politicians. Is this, in your view, a characteristic feature of the Maidan, is it characteristic of what was taking place in Ukraine in the last 20 years? Meaning that people were cheated by the politicians...

DW: The people were for sure cheated by politicians, on regular basis. I do not even know if I should call them politicians as it suggests existence of a certain system where there is nonetheless some form of representation – this would probably be too much to say. It seems to me that the hangover after the Orange [Revolution], as they were always referring in their memories to Orange [Revolution] as this negative experience and that is why they did not trust. And this lack of trust emerged as at a certain time and it seems to me that it was completely unique for this revolution.

PP: And was this "hang over after the Orange Revolution" was something that was present at the Maidan from the very beginning?

DW: From the very beginning. That was the base of conversations and analyses.

PP: How do you assess the influence of foreign factors, either from the West or East? What was their role and signs? I am particularly thinking about the EuroMaidan but maybe you also remember something from the Orange Revolution?

DW: I will not talk about the Orange Revolution in this context; I went there then with no preparation at all. Completely unprepared, I went there and I returned when it was over. And regarding the foreign factor, could you please make your question more concrete?

PP: We have already talked about the role of Western politicians there [at the Maidan] and their positive reception; how would you then assess the real steps taken by Western states?

DW: I believe that there were none. None. I think that if at that if there was no West, the dynamics of the situation would be very similar.

PP: Meaning the Minsk talks and earlier attempts and negotiations, with for example Sikorski's participation?

DW: No. This was an important element. As at a certain moment Yanukovich broke down and started talking to people, assuming that indeed he needs to negotiate this was a gigantic sign of the weakness of his establishment. Based on that, I think that Sikorski did a great job not even knowing about it. This talk, where Sikorski was of course not the only participant, was a revelation, also for the media, it showed that his weakness. It was no longer seen as a chutzpah and a red herring but his weakness. I also think that when we look at the speed with which the Party of Regions fell apart after Yanukovich escaped it seems to me that these gestures perceived as a weakness, here the gestures of the West were very important. But in other aspects, I do not think that it was not a driving force.

PP: But was there a feeling, at least at the symbolic level, of the solidarity of the West, its societies?

DW: Yes, this was felt very strongly. Only.... I am deeply convinced that Putin has more or less lost Ukraine; that he can now play the game which – as he believes – will bring him more than the puppet Yanukovich, regardless of whether he will succeed or not, but I think that his reactions are reactions which are showing that he had to react, mostly because he was losing his sphere of influence. I am convinced that when you talk to these people, I think that Putin knows that if they were standing like this, they got to know new standards. This is the base. And, more than anything, they learned about them in Poland. Meaning in the story about Poland as a country where you could live differently were of fundamental importance. The reasons? Simply, work abroad. From conversations... here of course we would need research but the majority of people whom I met they were telling me about their experience abroad as an element of learning about the world, which is different and almost always Poland was present there. It should be checked with numbers but my impression is that Poland has a gigantic domination. Especially given the fact that when they are in Poland they can make more money somewhere else, but they prefer to be in a similar culture. One that they understand better. That is why they stay in Poland. And I think that Putin knows that. And this is similar to what happened with Georgia. Hitting Georgia by Putin was not an element of his boredom and wanted to show something, but evidently that improving the standard of living there had effects on other places in South Caucuses and Georgia was presented as an example. The goal was to put an end to that and show that Georgia is not such an example that should be followed. It seems to me that is why he treats Poland as an enemy as he knows that Poland, even when it does not want to, even if the PO or PiS politicians, as I believe both these parties are losing in the East, for different reasons, but losing, it is our society that has influence, as a culture, which is revolutionary for Ukrainians.

PP: Is Poland's example seen in this that it shows that things can be different than in Ukraine or maybe you could notice in conversations that there are real references to Poland, that things should be "as they are in Poland"?

DW: These were not people who make some kind of analyses and thus I do not know how to answer this question. Poland was a symbol of a country where you could simply have a different life. Of course of great importance was the economic element, but also that in Poland a policeman cannot kill you. One of the things that surprised me when I arrived at the Maidan was this awareness that the police can for example rape. That these servicemen can enter your house, take you out and you will never come back. Everybody [at the Maidan] knew that things could turn this way. And Poland was showed as a country where such things do not happen. Meaning again, a negative example.

PP: I would also like to ask you about the place and role of religion and churches at the Maidan. Also in the material aspect: how many chapels there were, where could you find the clergy, where were they absent... How do you remember that?

DW: In my opinion religious services were held there all the time. There was a chapel, but when it comes to symbols when there was the bloodshed, which was unfathomable, the presence of religious symbols radically increased. There was a large turn away from the Moscow Patriarchate, something which did not happen before, as it was caused by the fact that the Moscow Patriarchate churches closed their doors to those who were escaping the beating and at the same time the "Ukrainian" Orthodox Church opened these doors and there was a hospital at St Michael's Monastery. This is where the injured and the dying people were sent when things got really bad. So this religious element got in and at a certain point there were two distinct symbols of the

Maidan, which were really striking, and which were not the Ukrainian flag but the archangel and a rosary. This is, in a way, funny as we are talking about the Orthodoxy.

PP: I understand that there was an inflow of the pious, there was a chapel, but were there also clergy present at the square?

DW: All the time, at the barricades; for example I remember a situation when Yanukovych (I am sure that on purpose) after the massacre at the Mariyinsky Park, suddenly by accident, a bus of young Berkut guys drove into the centre of the Maidan. And they started beating them, break them apart. I remember when a priest of the “Kyiv” Church got onto that bus and blessed these people inside. And this calmed the crowd down as they were really ready to lynch. And probably this bus was sent for. As taking out 20 youngsters and killing them, or even beating them up, would be a gigantic PR success. And he [the priest] calmed this crowd down. And even though this is a certain *pars pro toto* but not in a negative sense, but as the right attitude.

PP: Sure, and do you remember any denominations from Western Ukraine? Or the Protestant churches?

DW: Yes, yes, surely. Services were held, ecumenical services, even more than ecumenical as there were Jews there on the stage. In prayer. There were all there.

PP: One more question about the Tatars and more broadly believers in Islam. Were they present?

DW: *Unclear recording....* Yes they showed up. Actually this is quite unbelievable; Ukraine is the only country where the Pravy Sector together with the Tatars were guarding Jewish cementaries. And this showed a certain paradox of the situation where the Pravy Sector, which makes

references to a very ethnic tradition, had no problems with the Tatars and could together with them guard the religious sites of a different denomination.

PP: Was this the need of that moment or a more stable base?

DW: In my view these things are not only a necessity of the moment, but what will happen with them, we have to see. We have to wait, because this is the type of changes which – if they were to become observable – it won't happen in two years, but ten. Nonetheless, the Tatars are seen as heroes... and victims at the same time.

PP: Would you say that the Maidan was an inclusive phenomenon and by this created a Ukrainian society?

DW: I do not know if it has created it as the Ukrainian society is broader than the Maidan but Maidan itself was indeed very inclusive where the path to that what is considered political had also a religious aspect, which – even though completely dominated by the faith of the majority, also allowed other faiths and this was respected.

PP: Coming back to foreign influences, you were talking about Western Europe, but there is also Russia. And here we have a paradox: on the one hand there was Russia which is a tough player and the Party of Regions, on the other hand, which proved to be quite weak. How, according to your memory, was Russia defined at the Maidan?

DW: Since a certain moment as an enemy, but this was not the case in the beginning. But later came the war, and this anti-Russian sentiment emerged and became a basis, but this was the effect of time as in truth it [Russia] was not there. And why the Party [of Regions] went down like this? I think that it was simply a mafia structure and mafia structures tend to have it this way that once

their heads are removed the collapse. And the “weakness” is important here as at the moment when Yanukovich showed his weakness, it was like a signal to other criminals that we are either running away or reaching a deal with them [Maidan].

PP: One more thing in regards to Russia: is it an enemy since the war or was there a certain specific moment when the change took place?

DW: I cannot give you such a moment but this union between Yanukovich with Russia, which was quite obvious, at a certain point, along with the increasing desperation of the people, became an important element. At a certain moment rolls of toilet paper showed up with not only Yanukovich, but also Putin’s, face. Door mats.... Etc. And later there was the famous call ”Putin Chuylo”. And later there was Crimea and the sealing of the case.

PP: These products were they produced outside or produced inside the Maidan?

DW: I have no idea. It seems to me that these door mats or toilet paper had to come from factories.

PP: So there was an industry?

DW: Probably, but I cannot say it for sure. An industry of the moment. Just like before there were these bears that people were selling at the Khreshchatyk, in the same way people started selling these things. But I do not know how they were made. But the most direct products; the graffiti, the decorating of the shields, or occupied places or tents, these things were done by them.

PP: Returning to the summary, what did the Ukrainians get from the Maidan? In big words.

DW: I do not know what to say to answer such a question. I think that it includes a methodological error. I think that Maidan showed something that had already existed and allowed

for it to have a presence. So what it gave? It gave them the sacrifice of blood, which important as a political memory which can later become a myth. There is an attempt to make such a myth, but is it successful? I think that Maidan revealed what was in this society before.... And Maidan had to emerge, in one way or another, it had to. Such phenomena, even if somebody tries to control them at a certain moment.... Nonetheless you cannot provoke emotions that make you stay outside for a few months in winter days. Maidan simply showed what had been there before. It may not have produced changes as much as it was their effect. These changes took place in the Ukrainian society before the Maidan.

PP: And what Ukraine was showed by the Maidan?

DW: If I were to answer it with one sentence, there were flyers there saying "you won't beat our children". This was about Ukraine where you cannot be killed and then somebody will do nothing about it; where there is certainty, some kind of element of freedom.

PP: Can we, in simpler terms, say that Ukrainians wanted a liberal democratic state with a rule of law?

DW: No. I do not think so. I think that their needs were much smaller as a state does not need to be liberal-democratic for the police not to behave like corrupt monsters. They simply expected some phenomena, about which they had some knowledge, but they did not have any opportunities – mainly because of the way this state looks – to translate it into any coherent theory and they had not political representation which would take it as their own [agenda]... And of course they taking these, as we are using this word "verbal artefacts" which I had associations with but I think that at the most rudimental level it was all much simpler, but also much more important.

PP: Speaking about these verbal artefacts, do you remember any slogans?

DW: As I said they indeed were sticking to these dominating narratives that they want "democracy", "liberalism" and here we can agree – something more in the Western fashion. For them, for the majority of them, the Western permissiveness in some areas – as it is a very permissive society when it comes to abortion or sex – but the permissiveness in some areas as determined by the West, I do not agree with this, but let us say equal treatment, this is something they cannot understand. So they took out from this West its very small elements and if we were to take such a Ukrainian with his/her image of the West, and later show them the West, I think they would be deeply surprised. And the Russian narrative plays this game quite strongly. Meaning, like the Russian narrative is now selling Ukrainians as the Nazis and wild people who want to kill us, when you look at the Russian narrative in Ukraine you see that there people say that (I am sorry for the expression) Brussels is ruled by the fags and they will "force you to become homosexuals". This is how primitive things are but it also shows – well they are not playing it by accident – it shows this discrepancy between fanatic thinking and reality.

PP: And if you were to say personally how did you live through the Maidan?

DW: You know when we were later drinking and talking with Bobołowicz we said that we came to the singing and dancing revolution and we came back as war correspondents. Honestly speaking, I am very impressed with the courage. And the level of courage and determination of these people was just unbelievable. With – and this was probably the most beautiful in them – somewhere internalized sense of failure of their expectations.