

STAYING IN KYIV. “A COUNTRY THAT HAS SUCH HEROIC YOUNG MEN IS A POWERFUL COUNTRY”

Ukraine is a part of me; maybe this is the most expected answer.

Nevertheless, in fact, speaking frankly, I cannot imagine my life without my country. It is a world of my friends and colleagues, of different social and academic bonds, responsibilities, goals, and expectations. My parents are living in the US; they have been there for a long time, and they got the news about the possible war just a few weeks before the catastrophe hit us. They begged me to come to their home, but I refused. It was not possible for me even to think that I could stay in some other place when my country is in danger because of the actions of a foreign dictator. When the war began, my European friends from Poland and the UK (you know this for sure) offered me sanctuary, but this is not for me. I must stay here to do all I can to help my friends who are now struggling for Ukraine (and I work every day as a member of the Information Defence of Ukraine). We will not have a Victory Day if we all leave the country, though it's a natural instinct (mothers do need to save the lives of their children); we need to unite our efforts here in defence of Ukraine. The dictator understands this, which is why it was so important to unite militarily with our world partners.

I do not believe in the nuclear winter, but I still consider that only with the world army can we stop this monster.

I REMEMBER the sentence that I heard for the first time during the Orange Revolution, when I was a student at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. The concept of that sentence was that the heart of Europe is being beaten out in Kyiv.

In 2022, the heart of the world is in Ukraine. Ukraine is a country that may change ideas regarding the concept of



Dmytro Drozdovskiy in the streets of Kyiv region.

new politics. Now the courageous armed forces of Ukraine have changed the world's opinion of our people. Putin, I am sure, did not expect to get such powerful counterattacks and maybe the tyrant and his administration – the creators of the war – wanted to inflict a blitzkrieg.

But it is not possible to invade and conquer Ukraine in 2-3 days. It is not possible to conquer Ukraine in a month. Ukraine will continue to fight until the last Ukrainian. Moreover, this is a new concept for the world that lives in the post-capitalist, post-information, trans-cultural paradigm.

Ukraine has now become a world symbol – a country of heroism, brave hearts that of course want to live in the new comfortable reality; they have wives and children. However, each day our men now are standing at their posts, and they are ready to give their lives to save Ukraine from the enemy. This is a new representation of the human being where they are represented by something more than “the pursuit of

happiness”, the comforts of everyday life. Only in this paradigm, when we are ready to give our lives for our country – and we have no alternative – can we win. Those who are ready to meet the requirements of the war will forge the peace.

This is, in fact, an old idea represented in many Eastern cultural systems (the samurai for example). Our people represent this message to the world. In addition, I think the Ukrainian people are worthy of the Nobel Prize for Peace because they know how to fight to defend freedom. Only the strong armed forces of Ukraine can stop the dictator. His only power is a small nuclear button, with the help of which he blackmails the world.

SO FOR ME, Ukraine is a country of the future that is a symbol of “true” human identity. This is a country that represents the idea of the real “return to the human”. However, it resembles the idea that the humanity can only be in a safe

place if it is strong and if it is not afraid to devote itself to defence of its freedom and democracy. We need a new policy for the new world – what we have already had is not enough if we have such monsters on the planet. We are no longer in the polarised world of the 20th century, but we see that again in the multifaceted world of the 21st century we have Ukraine (and all our partners in the world) defending itself from invasion from the Russian federation and a dictator who ruthlessly pursues his place in the history books. This was started as the result of propaganda about Nazis in Ukraine. This is absurd and does not have any foundation in fact. The second point of absurdity is the idea of nuclear power in Ukraine that can be used against Russia. The third point of absurdity is the inflated rumors about biological weapons that can be used against Russia. In fact, Russian soldiers behave like Nazis, killing women and children in Ukraine. Mariupol will be a tragic symbol of the terrorism Russia is inflicting in Ukraine during this war.

I think the new motto for the world will be found in Ukraine: New concepts of peace and war, new concepts of human values and human essence. What is more important for me is the idea of deep transformation that we now have in our society that has been united to defend the country.

WE UNDERSTAND that Ukrainian independence is one important point, but the second important point is being with Europe politically, I mean being a member of the European Union. I am shocked, speaking frankly, by the position of some political leaders in Germany and the Netherlands. I understand that the process of becoming an EU member isn't quick. But war is an extraordinary situation, and we wait for extraordinary decisions of the EU despite what North Macedonia or Albania may say if Ukraine becomes a member of the EU, which is now ethical, logical and natural. Ukrainian people are dying for European values every day now. Putin does not want to appreciate the European future of Ukraine.

If we are politically in one system, then it will be much easier to stop the world aggression from Russia – people are be-



The National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine where the author works.

ing killed in Ukraine every day. What is more important: Saving lives or following detailed procedures according to bureaucratic mechanisms? Laws can be changed but humans only have one life. Now the EU must do all it can immediately to save the lives of Ukrainians. Money is nothing compared to human lives. European procedures are nothing compared to the essence of human lives. Or else we risk the holistic vicissitudes David Mitchell

“For Putin the concept of the Russian language in Ukraine is very important.”

predicts in his *Cloud Atlas*. Mitchell's biorobots live in Neo Seoul reality, thinking that they are in a happy world “producing” pleasant and comfortable things. But they are all in a new empire. Putin demonstrated that in fact he has followed the strategy of Hitler and his vision of how to “make Russia great again” (sorry for this slogan) is based on Nazi principles.

WE NEED TO STOP the aggression, we need to work as a unit, we need to rethink our life and find a new path.

I was in Suzirja theatre in Kyiv with my colleagues from that magnificent theatre. We had the feeling that February 23 could be a special day for the dictator who still intends to renew the Soviet Empire. This is the day of the new Soviet army.

Speaking frankly, my friends from the government sent me the news that the war would start the next day. I did not want to share this information, but sent a message to my friend Taras Kremin, who is the State Language Protection Commissioner, from the theatre in the evening, just so he could take all possible actions to support the institutions that might be attacked first as they are a part of the Ukrainian linguistic identity, and for Putin the concept of the Russian language in Ukraine is very important.

Moreover, one of my old friends who left the country on February 23, after which the sky “was closed” for civilian flights from Boryspil airport, also informed me about the imminent invasion. However, it was my conscious decision to stay with my country, supporting my compatriots in any way I can.

On March 24, I visited the military hospital in Kyiv together with my colleagues from one Kyiv publishing house. That was very important for me as I saw the “inner” world of the war of young soldiers injured. Many of them suffer in terrible pain after surgery as there is a shortage of painkiller medication.

Nevertheless, I saw people – quite young people, 18–28 years old – and they were so positive despite the pain and the injuries. They love Ukraine, they love this life, and they are ready to do everything possible to defend the country again and again despite all the physical inconvenience and pain. I am sure that a country that has such heroic young men is a powerful country. One colonel who was following me in the military hospital is an example of a very sincere and wise person. Every day he observes very difficult scenes of real life, but he exudes positive energies; he is a very intelligent and kind person. People who, after the attacks, after physical pain, can generate this energy of light and positive thinking are, figuratively speaking, immortal. For me, these people are heroes. ✕

Dmytro Drozdovskiy (PhD) is an Academic fellow of the Department of Foreign and Slavic Literatures at Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine.