Interview with Lev Zakharchyshyn (LZ). Interviewers: Iwona Reichardt (IR) and Kateryna Pryshchepa (KP). Venue: Gdańsk.

IR: Let me start with a question about your biography. What shaped your thinking of politics and how you look at politics now? What did influence your perception of politics in the 1990s? How you became who you are in the public sphere?

LZ: I think it was… [technical problems with recording].. Not many people know but there were… [recording interrupted again] after I graduated, I worked in the anti-system… but they were still in Moscow and in some bigger cities of the Soviet Union, ecological movements which fought to overcome problems in this field. There were students' environmental protection clubs. Now it is forgotten as it was probably in Russia, there were people in Moscow who said "no" to the system. [Incomprehensive] different violations of laws… they defended. The students fought. There were some dramatic situations, they were killed by [Incomprehensive]. So I met somewhere these young people, at a conference, as I worked in the environment protection field. It was the first meeting of this king, not within the framework of Komsomol or a party.

IR: How did they organize and communicate with each other?

LZ: Student circles. Just normally as youth. The revolutionary element is everywhere. It was like this. And it was clear that there was no politics, no political themes. Just environmental issues. But it was politics as well. It was still 1984. There was no perestroika yet.

IR: Perestroika, yes.

LZ: There were no perestroika yet.

IR: Indeed, there was no perestroika yet.

LZ: Sure thing, perestroika. It was one thing of this kind. The second were the events in Poland. In western Ukraine, we could watch Polish television so we knew a lot about things that other parts of the Soviet Union did not know about. We remember those directors on television, in military uniforms, at the time of martial law. It gave us some energy and also doubts whether this system had any sense. I remember clearly

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Gorbachev's speech. It was 1985, I guess. The first one was in April. He said that the country needed radical reforms. As a result, young people started somehow… Something needed to be done. This window got opened. And in 1987… I'm from Lviv. I came back to Lviv after working for some time in a different region. In Lviv, the association called "Tovarystvo Leva" was established. It was the first, truly impartial, pro-independence organization. Later on, this group of people gave birth to the National Movement of Ukraine, a society of Ukrainian language. Further large political projects arose from this little youth association. A group of friends asked me, it was an interesting group, as I had an ecological attitude, they wanted… Majority of people were from the artistic circles, stressing identity, cultural problems. But there was also demand for ecological topics. It was after Chernobyl and the catastrophe accelerated these processes. So we moved from this straight to the protests of 1988, first protests on the streets of Lviv, when thousands of people went out to the streets and the party had simply no idea what to do with them. In 1989, there were elections to the Supreme Council of the USSR and independent candidate were supported like [incomprehensive] who wasn't accepted by the party system but he won and, I guess in 1990, he supported Ukraine's national colors – yellow and blue – from the highest tribune in Moscow. It all started this way… (LZ laughs)

IR: Were you the chairman of this association?

LZ: I was its third chairman.

IR: How did you join it?

LZ: Through friends, a brother of my colleague from school. We actually met on the street: "You know, there is something good, would you like to join?", "Why not?"

IR: Did you actively participate in the Revolution on Granite?

LZ: No, not on Granite. There was an action. I was not a student at the time. It was a project of the students' circles. I was in a different place then. I didn't take part in it, but many of my friends, a bit younger than me, students, did. Perhaps it was because there were different approaches to this protest. For example, older dissidents who left prisons at the beginning, kind of didn't support it – I don't know if I can say that – but they wouldn't say if it was a good decision to undertake such a street, open protest. Because if we lost – we wouldn't win anything. There was a different way. And at that time opposition leaders were

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already in the parliament. They were a minority, but they were there. They put pressure on the political solution of the situation. Perhaps also because of these reasons I… I mean I wasn't as radical as five years before.

KP: Did you have a chance to talk to these leaders, or was it more in the press?

LZ: No, we in Lviv, from this group of dissidents there were… I mean we had permanent contact with them in 1987, 1988. As soon as they got out of prison, we organized first public meetings with them. The party couldn't stand this. We had always had problems because of this. We had contacts but these were two different circles. It is interesting that they didn't mix. They were quite closed and they didn't let others to shared decisions. We kept distance as well. There were two different generations and different visions of what to do. It was more tactical, less strategic. We pursued less political ways like for example politics through culture. They, after the experience of prison, knew this system better even though it was collapsing… It was all changing. So we had contacts and there was a decision, recommendation, vision that it wasn't necessary to fight in such a radical way. And, frankly speaking, it seemed that the Soviet system wanted to solve this in different way. Why such decision? One needs to check the archives and those who made these decisions, but they had an opportunity… technically there was no problem to shut down this protest. It wasn't like the Maidan, first or the second. It was quite a haphazard action, even though the students in Kyiv were pretty active.

KP: Were you before that… during the preparation of this action… Was there any information about it in Lviv?

LN: There was. In Lviv, there were very strong student associations and in fact they were present at most of, or even all, universities. I don't exactly remember but we that is "Tovarystvo Leva" were first. Then, students from our group started to create these students' associations. We had very close contacts, we cooperated and knew about everything, but there were two different projects. That is why students were going in this openly political direction and our association was more about culture, ecology, also politics. From our group, there were people at the beginning who later on created student association like Oleg, Maria Ivashchyshyn…

KP: Was it like that that they came up with this action and there were some preparations in Lviv and everybody knew about it whether to do it or not?

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LZ: There were the preparations but I wasn't in this circle, frankly speaking and I don't know the details. But I know it was said that there were contacts with Kyiv. It was also important for it not to happen in Lviv but in the capital and that Kyiv students support this protest. Otherwise, it wouldn't make much sense. Yes, a few thousand people from western Ukraine could have come but the point was to make it an all-Ukraine action. There was also around that time, perhaps a bit earlier but we need to look at the calendar, that an idea to create a human chain of reconciliation between Kyiv and Lviv was created. It worked as an accelerator for the society as well. But we knew that in Lviv there were so many people that they couldn't stay in one row but they had to create 10 rows and that the closer to Kyiv this chain wouldn't be so homogenous. Everyone understood that the awareness was higher in the west and this is why it [the protest – note] needed to be done in Kyiv.
KP: Why didn't the KGB interrupt the protest as the information was widespread as you said? Why didn't they try to prevent it and stop students from heading to Kyiv? It could be stopped still in Lviv.

LZ: I think there were some decisions about it. It means they could have prevented it and they would do it if they wanted to. And they could have stopped the leaders at the train station, it wasn't a conspiracy. We understand that there were informers in each student group, at every university and so on… Nobody had doubts about it. They could be also stopped in Kyiv in order to persuade them… So maybe it was a political decision made by the party: "let them shout for some time." And after they shout, everything will collapse. So finally, the prime minister resigned. It was a common success. Students got something. But the party didn't let the revolution spread, to become a real revolution. So maybe they didn't want to radicalize the situation and let the protesters release the tension.

KP: How was this protest perceived? You were observing all this. We know that in Lviv there was different perception of this protest that in other places.

IR: Was it present in the public sphere at all?

LZ: Yes it was, and there was general compassion. Of course, there were people who were against it, who didn't understand it. But what's important is that majority of people in Kyiv supported it and the media were informing about it. It is difficult to compare it now as the media were different at that time. There were no independent media, in contemporary terms. True information was in self-published materials. In independent papers. Official press presented a different point of view. But overall the society knew about

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it. So the organizers were preparing actions aimed at promotion. It meant students' demonstrations. They occupied some university buildings. In order to boost the wave of protest. Because Kyiv is a student city. There are several hundreds of thousands of students. Had they all been participating, that would have been a real revolution.

IR: Were there any consequences drawn against the students who took part in the protest? How did the academic circles react to it?

LZ: Most professors and the employees of higher education institutions reacted with compassion. Some privately, some in public, but as far as I remember there were no harsh consequences for the students, as it had happened before. Before, there were protests in 1987, 1988, 1989… Back then when someone was caught with leaflets or something like that they were simply expelled from the university. It used to be this way. I can't say now exactly but probably there weren't any. It could be also one of the elements of the state's tactic – the harsh reactions would only add fuel to the fire. Perhaps the strategy of the security services was to… [incomprehensible] …release the tension: "they will shout for some time, then go home."

KP: How do you evaluate the results of this protest? You mentioned a compromise – a dismissal of the prime minister but how did it influence further events?

LZ: The outcome was very serious. Why? Because it was maybe not the first such an important action, but I would, saying physiologically, an act of political defloration. Our society at that time was afraid of violence, struggle and use of power. And all these protests were thought in a way not to allow a physical conflict to happen. And there was January 1990 and the events in Vilnius – everybody could see it on television and there was fear of such radical moves. And so the student revolution – it was the first such radical event. It wasn't just like a simple meeting – waving flags, shouting and going home. It was a permanent, public action. In the heart of Kyiv. It was very important as a psychological crossing of this barrier – that it was possible to fight not only calmly and rationally but also radically, in a student way. And that it could also work. An important element, as I mentioned already, was the attitude of older politicians, dissidents, who were at the parliament. The youth showed unfortunately – or maybe rather fortunately – that the truth was on their side, that the walls can fall. And that we did not need to only think about purely political methods but the street law can be successful too. It was very important because it

created a reflection for the future Maidans. We can talk and negotiate until a certain point but after one moment, we need to fight seriously.

KP: Now more factual question. Do you remember any names? Who of those starving in Kyiv was a member of the "Tovarystvo Leva"?

LZ: I don't want to omit anyone, there were many of them. Oleh Kuzan, Markian Ivashchyshyn, Roman [incomprehensive recording], some of them well-known leaders nowadays, some normal Ukrainian citizens. But from the association, there were couple of dozen people for sure. Girls and boys. We'd need to take a look at the list of those who were there.

KP: We are trying to assess to what extent this association could have…

LW: You may contact Oleh Kuzan. He was one of the leaders and he could add more information for sure.

KP: So let's try to move now…

IR: To the Orange Revolution. Were you directly involved in it?
LZ: Yes, that time I was.

IR: In Kyiv, on Maidan?

LZ: In Kyiv, yes, yes.

IR: I understand that for you this revolution wasn't a surprise. Were you engaged in it since the beginning? Or did you get engaged at a certain moment?

LZ: I need to say that this revolution didn't start from the point when people went to Maidan. It started when Yushchenko's party won parliamentary election. They won it but their after-election policy was making it unable to form a majority. It was some sort of an impulse. In our lives, there are sine waves of higher and lower activity. Ten years passed since the Revolution on Granite, even more – 11, true. There was collapse of the USSR, creation of the independent state, the euphoria of a great victory but during that time nothing of what we dreamt of had happened. Crisis. Kuchma, Kravchuk won the presidential

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elections. And also economic and social problems. Anxiety was rising. Yushchenko became the prime minister, he implemented successive monetary reforms, introduced national currency. A trustworthy leader appeared from the group of former party functionaries. He was not a part of the party elite, but the professional elite. He was a banker. It gave people hope that there will be a change. That a new leader will come and make changes. And good results of the parliamentary election. After there was a failure. This political elite couldn't form a majority in the parliament. A defeat. And then another election. OK. We had a great hope. A tremendous uplift of people, crowds in Kyiv. Public opinion polls indicated that he could win. On the other hand, Yanukovych and the Donetsk clan, which wasn't well-received not only in the West but also in the entire Ukraine, with the exception of Donetsk oblast. There were also internal conflicts between Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk. And a very, I'd say, contrast situation. On the one hand, a pro-European, friendly, charismatic Yushchenko and, on the other, a post-Soviet, mafia-style Yanukovych. The entire society lived in a presumption that there will be a change. I remember this well, the results of this election. I was in Lviv at that time. I was then working for a private business. And in my office there was a certain system. There were a point of monitoring of the election results established by the opposition. They were afraid that there could be police attacks and they established some points also less officially and they were conducting polls but there [incomprehensive]. I was somehow involved in this process. I wasn't active politically but I communicated with this circle and I remember very well that morning, when snow was falling in Kyiv, and the pro-Yushchenko television channels were reporting that Yushchenko won the presidency, while the pro-Yanukovych ones telling the opposite. And yet that moment, when a few hundred people standing on Maidan. The scene was set up… There was an order for Yushchenko staffers from across Ukraine to bring the stamped protocols, according to the procedures. That we all are going to Kyiv and perhaps there will be a need to stay. This is how it all happened. In the morning, you could watch this revolution on television live, how people were coming in. A few hundred people, it wasn't a huge gathering. Not like what happened during the next Maidan. But there was a moment… I called my friends: "What are we going to do?", "What?", "We're going". I had a car, four people wanted to go with me, some canned food, some sleeping bags and we're ready. The decision that it could't be like this any longer. A point that we couldn't afford to cross. And a very strong motive that we already lost once in 1990, or after 1990, 1991. We hadn't done what we were supposed to do. We have to do it now. And thousands of people were like this. We were driving by night. We could listen through the radio where there are demonstrations, where the police posts were, where to go. Thousands of buses and cars, all going to Kyiv. A totally spontaneous action. Yushchenko staffers were coordinated but as a member of this staff I signed up only for this, not for a revolution. Revolution was my other decision. We left Lviv in the evening, yet there were crowds in front of the state administration buildings. The protests started. Students…

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Something was going on. You could feel it clearly that there was not going to be another small rally but something serious was happening. So we arrived in Kyiv. On the next day, there were already hundreds of thousands of people and the people… [incomprehesive recording].

IR: Were you directly a member of Yushchenko's staff?

LZ: I mean I wasn't a member of the staff. I wasn't a big boss in this situation. My colleagues were there. I was in touch with them. I made a decision for myself because too many people on board, that's not very good. At that moment, I wasn't involved in the political process to push myself to be staff. I did what I was supposed to do. We did some simple technical things: someone needed to be picked up or we needed to buy megaphones. Or simply be there, to make sure people were there. To continue. I didn't have any special missions to fulfil there. I was in touch. I remember after few days of protests, there was a decision. If you look at the chronology, there was a moment when there were attempts to enter the presidential administration building. Unarmed guards showed up. Yulia Tymoshenko was going somewhere, negotiating, then coming back. And there was a decision to storm the building of the Verkhovna Rada, Mariyinsky Palace. So the young men of a certain age and capabilities were needed. I mean, there were no trainings. But there were instructions how to dress, what to take and how to behave in this or that situation. There were special leaders there who were prepared for this and they were about to lead this. I was just a rank and file. In our everyday work, we had one point next to the president's administration where we were about to stay and make sure there were no provocations. A simple mission.

IR: Were there any provocations?

LZ: All the time… You didn't always know whether it was a provocation or stupidity. I remember very well when a group of young, short-haired and muscular men with characteristically broken noses approached us at our point. We didn't know why they came to us. It was a suspicious group. Then, one of my colleague said that we needed to make noise that they were provocateurs. I told him to wait as we didn't know who they were. So we went to speak with them and it turned out they were with us! [the speaker is laughing] It was a group of guards from a big company which supported Yushchenko. It wasn't a provocation. It was a misunderstanding. But there were a lot provocations. I had friends who had nothing to do with politics at all. There were from Kyiv, from the Russian-language speaking circles. We met accidentally as one of them called me and told me that he was there. He was a member of a paramilitary and reconstruction group, something like that. "How can I help you?" "Take some people, patrol here and

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there. Some simple things." First of all, that people could act. They were doing it and there were many similar cases.

IR: What fascinates us… In our research, we examine the process of learning of the organizations operating during the three Ukrainian revolutions. Whether these revolutions learned from each other. For example, did the Orange Revolution used some experiences from the Revolution on Granite? Or do you think it was more an organization process based on action-reaction approach?

LZ: Yes, and yes. On the one hand, some leaders of the Revolution on Granite were among the staffers and they perhaps were passing on these experiences. But the logistics were totally different. The Revolution on Granite was an act… It didn't have the external support. It was a self-sufficient revolution. We took some sleeping bags, some food and we decided to go. People were donating and giving support. It was a 100% social action. But the recent revolution on Maidan was also about business and the oligarchs.

IR: It was visible?

LZ: Yes, it was. For example, they secured food for the protesters. They set up stands where you could eat a free meal. Poroshenko put gigantic money into it. He invested huge money in it, I think. There were a few businessmen who supported it systematically – helped set up stages, cars with megaphones. A major part of the society was engaged in it. Not only students but also the whole spectrum of the society. Including business, what's important.

IR: Did it start with the Orange Revolution?

LZ: Yes, it did.

IR: And then it was passed to the EuroMaidan? The Revolution of Dignity, right?

LZ: It was passed because the Revolution of Dignity was more similar to the first Maidan. It was its continuation, one could tell. It was a systemic action. And many experiences… For example, to set up the stage on the first night and take over the square. These are important elements. Large military tents were also established in 2004. Later on, people would start living there. It was a fixation that we are here, we

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stand and protest. There will be nothing else here, there will be a revolution. If you don't do this, people will go home in the evening. There's no base, right?

KP: Were there any other events between 1991 and 2004, any protests, that could have influenced the events of the Orange Revolution?

LZ: It is a very interesting question as there were a lot of protests "Ukraine without Kuchma", events of March 1990, maybe a year or two between them. They weren't supported by the society. In my opinion, it was like that because there was no strong leader in these protests. In case of these protests, there was no feeling of defeat shared by the major part of society. Because, after the elections, when around 50% voted for him, they were very determined. Before, there more like protest actions. It means it was a moment of depression with the social situation. And then an explosion. And a trusted leader as well. Yushchenko became a symbol who united different circles. His campaign was also very well done, visually. Symbol, colours, and orange ribbons. It worked very well. At one point, I remember it well, my colleague was walking around Lviv and handing out these ribbons to the people. And the people put then on their cars, clothes… A very dynamic action. And then the entire society became orange. You see it on trees, streets and buildings. While we were on our way to Kyiv, we were looking for clothes with some orange elements. It was very successive. A colourful revolution. Technologically, it was very professionally done, so there were results.

KP: A question to you as a participant: how did you imagine the end of this revolution? What kind of results did you expect? How should it have been finished?

LZ: Are we talking about the Maidan?

KP: About the Orange Revolution, still.

LZ: The main trigger of the protests was an unjust electoral decision. Opinion polls, as well as the results of the protocols, which were in possession of both sides, pointed out that Yushchenko was the winner. If it wasn't like this, maybe there would be no protest. The most important motive was injustice: we won and they stole our victory. The only way was to bring back justice. It happened by the decision of the Highest Court. Then it was fine, what we wanted to happen, happened. It was the simplest emotion, yes. For most people, it was fine, Yushchenko became the president, let's go home. We don't need to do anything else,

he has to solve all the problems. That was a problem – the leaders were like the society. Yushchenko as well because he did not know how to… he didn't make it to communicate with the society. He didn't make it to implement a political project which could be pro-state. It was like that with the "Our Ukraine" political party. I mean the first fight was won. But the battle was lost. He was alone at the end. And these internal conflicts: Tymoshenko, Poroshenko etc. I remember when Yushchenko came to Lviv one year after Maidan. There was a large gathering in front of the Lviv Opera. Back then I joined a circle which later became a party, a well-known one. As we were getting ready for the presidential visit, we were talking about what to do and how to react. So there was a decision. We had a large poster: "Mr. President, we need to talk." It was a moment when we, as an active part of society, wanted to communicate. The lack of communication was a problem. It often happens that the leader loses communication which is necessary. It was one side of this success. And, in the end, what happened, happened.

IR: It was an observation made by a Polish journalist who said he could interview Yushchenko at any time during the revolution, but he couldn't make it after he was elected. So…

LZ: In my view, there were a few problems Yushchenko had. One was a basic one. He wasn't a revolutionary person in his psychology. He wasn't ready for harsh fight, fight that could be dangerous for life. After poisoning, he was psychologically damaged. It was a horrible action. But he was demoralized. I don't know if they wanted to kill him or scare him. He was a man at the top of his career. A new wife, a little child. A good financial situation. What revolution? What to fight for? He had everything! He had a good career, a good reputation. He won the election. The entire world was admiring him: the US, the EU! At one point he perhaps believed that it was a victory. But it wasn't. It was just the beginning and this is why… psychologically he didn't fit as a leader in this situation. A person that was needed was a determined freak who doesn't have anything personal. Someone who'd just have a great goal and pursue it. He was lacking this freaky element.

KP: Coming back to the events of 2004, how did you, or your colleagues, perceived the activity of the international players? Were they expected?

LZ: Yes. It was a moment of dead end. I understand that Yanukovych put pressure on Kuchma not to surrender and that "we will press this situation." People on the streets didn't want to give up because they realized how powerful they were for the first time in the contemporary history. Because there were no such protests before. Revolution on Granite was a little stone. They could feel this power and anxiety because of

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injustice. And this could be felt for a day, two, three. But nothing was happening. In such a situation, if the authorities are strong, they have a chance to wait and see what happens, if people get tired and go home. It wasn't the same conflict as in Poland, in the Gdańsk Shipyard where there was a base because there was an enterprise and people could stay there and fight. In Ukraine, it was a street. And winter. In this context, this was a dead end, and the negotiations at the round table with the participation of presidents of Lithuania, Poland…

IR: Solana…

LZ: Yes, Solana. Then there was hope that they can put some pressure on Kuchma and force him to act the way that the people on the streets demanded him to act. And it happened in the end…

KP: The course of events itself: did you expect that the state could response with violence? Was there fear of the protesters?

LZ: Yes, there was. At that time we all lived in the information society. We listened to channel 5, independent radio. Internet, right? Some military units arrived, some planes as well. Titushky who were not there at that time. Coal miners from Donets with batons. Everyday there were rumours that something like that would happen. That there will be bloodshed, that they will shoot. So this feeling was there all the time.

IR: Were you directly involved also in the EuroMaidan?

LZ: Yes, I was and also as a rank and file. My career had changed over time because I left small business in 2006 and I was elected as a deputy to the Lviv Regional Council and I was its vice-chairman. So the bureaucratic career started, so to say. After I joined it, political things started… We don't talk about it much but after the Orange Revolution, the council in Lviv had no representative from the Party of Regions, they had no chance to get in there. And a fierce struggle between Yulia Tymoshenko, the National Movement and "Our Ukraine", and… Svoboda party etc. Some internal processes. I went further into the public administration so I remember them very well. It was all very similar with the Orange Revolution. A great hope that we will sign the agreement with the EU, that Yanukovych had no other option, that Ukraine will move towards the EU. A hope that "we will do it". Poland had demonstrated that. What makes us worse than Poland? Poland is the greatest example. And then the retreat process started. The first protests

were very, very similar to what was before, but the time was shorter. The first protests against the non-signing of the agreement with the EU, some political parties, some parliamentarians shouted something. A day, then second day, and then it started to loose dynamics. It was in 2001, 2002, 2003, "Ukraine without Kuchma." I don't know exactly the motives of the beating up of the students at night. But also the media effects. I turned on the internet in the morning and started reading that something like that had happened. It had happened. I called my colleagues: "What to do?" "Let's go to Kyiv." We went there for one day to protest. But it wasn't as at the times of the Orange Revolution. It started already, the election campaign was ongoing. I remember it very well, I have some pictures from Kyiv. We had some experience already. We met next to the university with friends from Lviv. We walked via Shevchenko boulevard, this crowd, hundreds of thousands of people. It didn't start this way even in the case of the Orange Revolution. It was starting. There were different numbers: eight thousands, five hundreds. It doesn't matter, it was huge. This energy of the crowd. Everyone started with this, such a peaceful mood. We don't want blood. We just want to be listened to and to change that decision. What was later, we all know…

IR: Speaking of the events and organization, professor Yaroslav Hrytsak told us that one of the methods of warming up was putting mustard seeds in socks and shoes. Where does such knowledge come from? Looking from the western point of view, the revolution shouldn't take place in winter because it is impossible to stand cold. And the Kyiv's climate… But the Ukrainians could withstand?

LZ: Exactly, the Ukrainians are weird people. First of all, one needs to know that Ukraine is a very big state. But your question is not about the size of the country, because even if it was a smaller one, the entire social spectrum joins the action: tourists, military, special forces units, veterans. Everyone who has the special experience that the majority doesn't have. It replicates that it is necessary to act in a certain way. It is interesting because at that time I was working for the public administration. I couldn't say openly I was going to Kyiv. So I wasn't there all the time. I was going to Kyiv because my wife has a flat there. We gathered with colleagues there. I made a decision for myself, it was such a group of people. We had night shifts because at night there were the least people and the highest risk of attack. It turned it in such a way that we were taking night shifts, in the coldest time. There were also people with war experience, after serving in Afghanistan or in the UN forces. Also special forces. They all passed us the knowledge as how to stand up to the police. There were some naïve things too. People in workers' helmets which were not useful at all. One hit with baton and it breaks. It makes no sense. But it was interesting, the social activity. People tied bottles to their legs to stand up.

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KP: During the Orange Revolution there was a fear of violence. Why, do you think, it happened this time? Why was it possible to solve these conflicts peacefully earlier but not that time?

LZ: It happened because of the government's provocation. What's different is that the recent revolution lasted longer than the Orange Revolution. I remember well the first days [incomprehensive] that no one can be reckoned with it. But on the very first day there was a conflict in front of the presidential administration. It didn't take place during the Orange Revolution. At the times of the Orange Revolution, there were no open clashes between the protesters and the police. It happened on the first day of Maidan. There was a lot of discussion in the media as who provoked it. The government had prepared it itself. But I don't go into it. There are people who should research it. It showed that Yanukovych is not Kuchma. And that he will not… He is a Donetsk type of man. In this region hundreds of people are buried under the ground only because of the conflict with rivals. A totally different approach to life standards, to values. Kuchma was liberal in this sense. Yanukovych and his colleagues, it was more criminal than political. Speaking of standing in the cold. One day or two. Nothing happens. Some minor scuffles with the police, but very mild. The government counted on it. The destruction had started. We had to go back home, or not. In fact, there were significantly fewer people there but the whole powerful infrastructure was created. The barricades, the economic background. First conflicts on Hrushevsky street when people moved there. First clash with Molotov cocktails. So it was all accelerating. First casualties were there. A Belarusian and an Armenian. I remember well that moment when we found out about the first victims. I said to myself: "OK, it's not going to be like 2004 this time." Blood liquidates the violence taboo. It was a horrible event when there was an attempt to go to the Verkhovna Rada, a few dozen people were killed. It became clear then that after was had happened, it won't be silent. People started to bring weapons to the Maidan. The preparations an armed conflict started. I remember you could hear these offers… I didn't buy it but I was close to make the decision to buy a Kalashnikov. With bullets. The price was, I don't remember, 1,000 – 1,500 dollars. And the people started. The market. It became clear that there would be some people who would move from idea to decision. So it started.

IR: We've been told by several people that it wasn't just the Ukrainian-Ukrainian conflict and that they observed actions of the third parties. Was it also your experience?

LZ: Fundamentally, it wasn't a Ukrainian-Ukrainian conflict. It was more like a Russian-European conflict, a conflict between civilizations. I call them, Anglo-Saxon civilization: the US-European Union, and Russia. It was the beginning, maybe not the beginning, but the clear consequences of Putin's policy

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because he forced Yanukovych to this decision. Yanukovych and his clan were rather closer to the comforts of the EU integration. They were afraid of the integration with Russia because it could swallow them or put pressure. For them, the EU was a better option. They were afraid that some cleaning, controls and anti-corruption fight could take place. This is why it seems like it's just an internal Ukrainian conflict. These two parts of Ukraine are in fact supported and steered… I was aware I was fighting for the European values. To me, the UE and the US were our organic allies, we wanted to get closer to them. Their support was not a matter of concern for me. I didn't see any other way out of this situation. I didn't see any other than that we had to count on this support because if it was not a common project, it won't work. Also people from East of Ukraine, from the region of the anti-Maidan looked at Russia and it was an organic ally for them and they wanted Ukraine to develop in that direction…
KP: Did you expect at the beginning of this protest how it would end? I mean what was the expected…?

LZ: Oh… [laughing] for sure that it would be similar. But as I said, the Maidan had different dynamic. The first meeting in Kyiv was attended by a few hundred thousand people. There was hope that nobody could ignore it because it wasn't a small demonstration. Even these few thousand people who were at the European Square, it's something very different. It wasn't these 300 students that were beaten up at the Maidan. There was a feeling that they had to start negotiations, dialogue with the opposition about what to do. But the tactic that was adopted was to get people tired, let it melt like snow.

KP: Do you, after all these experiences, think that such forms as mass protests… will Ukrainians want to take part in something like that…

LZ: Mhm… I think, first of all, that mass protests are a result of the lack of political structure. It doesn't work, yes. It is also, in a way, an evaluation of the politicians in power, and the fact that they do not appreciate the people. This is why I hope that the Ukrainians are still constructing the political structure. And if such a structure, which would satisfy the majority of the society is constructed, then maybe the protests won't be necessary. The elite has to learn how to govern a state. It is a basic thing. Why there are no protests like this in the western states? Even in the US, after Trump's victory, protests are rather sporadic. Because the society trusts, or expects, that the political elite will manage. Here, there is no such faith. There is a tremendous crisis of trust in political elite. It still lasts. This is also the last human argument: if politicians can't manage, we have to do it… It's normally not a good solution but it's good that there is a solution like this. For example, there is no solution like this in Russia. The Russian society doesn't have this solution. It accepts what it has. It is a completely different issue. But it is very hard to

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imagine that something like that could happen in Moscow. I mean there is an element of a Cossack tradition here, this basic democracy. This is why there will be no protests if we manage to establish an affective political system. Or maybe just in some crisis moments when the political elite fail…

IR: Thank you very much.

LZ: Thank you.

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