

# СТУДЕНТ

## STUDENT ETUDIANT

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COVER: ANNA SUDYK



# A letter from the “Student” editor



SUSK “Student” editor Alexandra Holyk (left) greeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (right) when he arrived to Canada for the first time on July 1, 2019.

Dear Student,

It has been almost a month since Russia invaded Ukraine under the direction of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Over 3 million people have fled Ukraine in the last four weeks, thousands have been killed and thousands more have been injured. This is a humanitarian crisis, a genocide, and *real* action must be taken by countries within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in order to put an end to the war and Putin’s tyranny.

In these last four weeks, Ukrainians in the diaspora have been doing everything possible to raise awareness and funds about what’s going on in our cultural homeland. This issue highlights some of those initiatives as well as the impact of

the war on the next generation of Ukrainians living in diasporic communities such as the one we have here in Canada. Whether we have recently immigrated to Canada from Ukraine or are fifth-generation Ukrainian in Canada, we are immensely proud of our Ukrainian culture, language, heritage, traditions and history and will stand up against whatever Putin throws at us. We will continue to do so through holding fundraisers, collecting physical and monetary donations, organizing events, offering support groups and spreading accurate information both in-person and virtually, through social media.

Разом нас багато – нас не подолати. Слава Україні! Героям Слава!

– Alexandra Holyk

## TL;DR – What's happening in Ukraine?

As of March 21, Ukraine has defied Russia's demand for soldiers to lay down arms in Mariupol, where civilians are besieged in a city being laid to waste by bombardment.

Russia's almost month-old assault on Ukraine has stalled along most fronts, failing to seize any major city or topple the government. But shelling and missiles are causing devastation.

Nearly 6.5 million people have been uprooted from homes, the United Nations says.

Peace talks resumed, but there is no sign of significant progress.

### How far have Russian troops advanced?



# A message from SUSK's president



CREDIT: ALYSSA MARTSCHENKO

Dear Readers,

I welcome you to *Student* — a newspaper publication written by students, for students.

This month we are releasing a special edition discussing the full-scale military invasion that Russia launched on Ukraine on

Feb. 24, 2022. In this issue, students across Canada share their stories, insights, and valuable opinions on the ongoing war in Ukraine.

In the first week of the invasion, SUSK has been advocating on behalf of Ukrainian Canadian students and International students from Ukraine.

On Feb. 23, 2022, SUSK representatives met with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland and other members of Cabinet to discuss Canada's role in supporting Ukraine.

A few days later, a delegation of SUSK met with New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh to discuss support for Ukrainian Canadian students and Ukrainian International students.

First, we emphasized the work we are doing in achieving more support from academic institutions and how the Canadian Government can help support

our students.

Second, we introduced the idea of allowing for the credits and educational accomplishments that post-secondary students in Ukraine have achieved be transferred to Canadian post-secondary institutions.

We are awaiting action on these matters from the Canadian government. This is only the beginning of our work in supporting Ukraine.

Youth have a powerful voice when it comes to advocating for their beliefs. We have seen that impact over the past week, and we encourage all of our students to continue advocating for what they believe in. Not only has this unprovoked invasion changed history, but the courage, strength, and resistance that Ukraine has shown, has inspired the world.

Слава Україні! Героям Слава!

— Danya Pankiw  
2021-22 SUSK President



## SUSK NATIONAL CONGRESS, 2022

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# How to help Ukraine on a student budget

By Valeriia Suknova, Ukrainian Students' Club at Humber College

Picture this: you wake up in your bed, grab your phone to check your messages without a single worry, and the whole world goes silent in a split second as soon as you see the load of messages that have been waiting for you a few hours for you to read — time zone differences tend to be cruel. It could be a message from your mother who woke up in the middle of the night from the unmistakable sound of a missile landing in the nearest parking lot, or a missed call from your friend who ran for her life to the basement, not quite understanding what to do next, and was suddenly struck by the realization that she forgot her precious cat in her room, three floors and one big threat away from her hiding spot.

This is how Feb. 23 ended for many of us. It gave us a new, dark way of keeping track of days, insomnia, anxiety, the harshest transition into adulthood one could possibly have, and survivors' guilt. Given that we are all in college and either exist entirely off our parent's budgets or at the very least rely on them, the thought of not being able to make a tangible impact without burdening those who support us financial-



ly, especially if they are currently in Ukraine, adds on to the guilt. However, there is a multitude of ways that you as a Ukrainian or a foreign ally, can help without going beyond the student budget.

You can donate your clothes that you don't wear anymore to a charity such as Red Cross Canada or individual volunteers who ship humanitarian aid to Ukraine. This is by far the cheapest way to support Ukraine, as the most you will be spending is bus fare to the closest donation location. People fled their homes with a few necessities in a small backpack and oftentimes do not have a jacket to keep them warm or something to change their toddler into. You could even add a book you previously enjoyed for someone to read as a way to distract themselves.

Another way to help out without splashing out is adding a couple more items to the basket during your regular grocery trip. A pack of painkillers, some nappies, canned food that won't go stale anytime soon, and a bottle of shampoo are much needed both in Ukraine and in bordering countries that are accepting refugees and providing them with a bed and a dinner. Consider donating to Romanian, Polish and Czech charities to help them accommodate the rapid flow of Ukrainians seeking refuge.

In the same price category you can make a small monetary donation to a trustworthy international organization, for instance, Unicef, UNHCR, or buy a Ukrainian artist a coffee (not necessarily a literal coffee)

via the Kofi or Etsy platforms and receive a unique piece of art in return for your kindness. As long as you are confident they are not scamming you and taking advantage of the situation, you could purchase from an international creator who donates all or part of the profits to a charity.

Last but not least, the task of volunteering can be taken on. Canada has been working hard on simplifying the immigration process and offering housing, jobs and all types of support to new-coming Ukrainians. If you have a little free time on your hands, contact a local church or community centre to see if they need someone to prepare food, administer aid, or teach Ukrainian refugees basic English or french in case they do not speak any. Hearing about their experiences may be heartbreaking, but helping them settle in as they figure out their next steps is extremely important.

In these trying times, any help is highly appreciated. It might feel like going to a rally is the most you're capable of with a tight budget like yours when you read the headlines and inform yourself about the current situation. But you're only one sweater, one can of soup, or insulin pen away from making a change.

## WHERE CAN I DONATE?

## SCAN THE QR CODES BELOW!



UNITE WITH UKRAINE



NATIONAL BANK OF UKRAINE



CANADA UKRAINE FOUNDATION



COME BACK ALIVE

FOR NON-MONETARY DONATIONS IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA, VISIT @TORONTOSECONDFRONT ON INSTAGRAM.



# A war with two battlefields

## How disinformation is fuelling the Russian-Ukrainian war

By Emma Telizyn, Ukrainian Students' Club at Humber College

In a world where information is power and power is currency, how do we make sure the news we're consuming is legitimate? If you're already asking yourself these questions, you're making a good start towards a better understanding of media literacy. Now, more than ever, the ability to question, challenge, and verify information is critical — especially in regards to the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war. To develop a deeper understanding on the importance of media literacy, we must first learn to identify the three main tactics used within online information environments. You may have heard the terms misinformation, disinformation and fake news before, but what do these words really mean and where do they come into play in the war?

### In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian war, disinformation has been created for political gain

To begin, let's take a look at the term misinformation, and subsequently disinformation. Both terms are closely related in meaning but there is one major difference between them: intent.

Though misinformation is harmful, it's not deliberately created to cause harm and is typically shared by those who are unaware that what they're sharing is "...fabricated or false," according to an article written by Theordora Adjin-Tetty, titled: "Combating fake news, disinformation, and misinformation:

Experimental evidence for media literacy education."

In contrast, disinformation is intentionally created to mislead, usually for political or monetary gain as Danny Paskin mentions in an article called: "Real or Fake News: Who Knows?" In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian war, disinformation has been created for political gain. A good example of an attempt at disinformation would be the Russian trucks filled with food and cameras in Kherson on March 4, 2022 — they were only there to gather false evidence to support Putin's distorted political agenda but failed due to the integrity and strength of the Ukrainian peoples. Proof of this can be found on a variety of social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram.

Keeping this in mind, it's important to recognize the roles these tactics play in fake news. This is particularly relevant in regards to the Russian-Ukrainian war because anyone can publish articles online and repost old, exaggerated videos and images via a variety of media platforms as Paskin makes note of in his article.

Paskin states that fake news can appear online as "news reports, editorials, exposes" amongst newer formats such as social media posts and web brigades, also known as bots or trolls. These fake news sources consist of false information "pretending 'to be factual, but... contain intentional misstatements with the intention to arouse passion, attract viewership or deceive,' (Hunt, 2017, p. 5)."

So now that you have a better understanding of how and why

fake news is created, why does it matter and how can we identify it?

In the same way that the war is being fought in the real world, it's also being fought online.

A study titled "Better Ask Your Neighbour: Renegotiating Media Trust During the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict" by Olga Pasitselska introduces the concept of folk media theories. Pasitselska clarifies the term folk media theories as "an intermediate position between the individual sense-making and cultural conventions. Allowing evaluation practices to adapt to the changing social context."

Pasitselska determines this means that not only is the way we consume and interact with media dependent on our pre-existing knowledge of the internet, but it's also dependent on "Family, friends, or even acquaintances who...have a similar 'common user' background and understand each other's needs, [who] can therefore share information in a 'relatable manner.'"

### The Russian media will do anything to convince you that they are the heroes

There is a reason why misinformation, disinformation and fake news is so prevalent today and it's due to natural human bias. This is also one of the main reasons why fake news and Russian web brigades have been so successful — trick one person and they'll trick five more.

As a result, it's even more important that we're able to develop strong media literacy skills. When something is shared online that you may be unsure

of, investigate it. Ask yourself who's posting it? Where is it being shared? Try to figure out the intentions behind the source — every form of media has an intention behind it. Is it political? Monetary? Pay attention to the phrasing of the language used. As George Orwell famously states in an essay titled "Politics and the English Language," political language "has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness." The less specific something is, the more red flags it should raise.

Misinformation, disinformation and fake news thrives and relies on human bias. That's one of the many reasons why Russia has introduced so many laws against freedom of speech; one of the most recent laws passed being one that "effectively criminalises any public opposition to or independent news reporting about the war against Ukraine," according to New York Times author Anton Troianovski in an article called "Russia takes censorship to new extremes, stifling war coverage."

This intentional disinformation, fuelled by the Russian government, is exactly why "fake news has been listed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as one of the main threats to society," as Adjin-Tetty mentions in their article on combating fake news.

Unlike any other war fought in history, the Russian-Ukrainian war has two battlefields: on the ground and online. The Russian media will do anything to convince you that they are the heroes. It's up to you to determine the truth.



# Keeping Ukrainian culture

Words by Kebrija Leeks-Kottick, Ukrainian

In order to explain the importance of keeping Ukrainian culture alive in the diaspora I think it's important to explain where I'm coming from and where many Ukrainians and Ukrainians with mixed ancestry from the earliest waves I've met have felt and encountered when trying to stay involved in the Ukrainian community and/or reconnecting.

I am a fourth- and fifth-generation Ukrainian Canadian on my maternal grandmother's side and grew up in Ottawa, Ont. I am currently the President of the Ukrainian Students' Club at Humber and a member of the Ukrainian Canadian Students' Union (SUSK) Advocacy Committee. My involvement in the Ukrainian community has varied over the years, but during the last few years I have really pushed to reclaim space that wasn't openly accessible to me growing up as a Ukrainian of mixed ancestry and living in a city with a smaller Ukrainian population than where my mother's family have lived.

Within Canada my Ukrainian family and consequently myself were affected by discrimination and oppression through the denial of employment, basic resources such as electricity and running water in rural & remote areas, Internment Camps (WW1) and the War Measures Act (WW1) to only name a few. All these things impacted our ability to pass down language, stay connected to our cultural practices and stay connected to our family in the motherland as borders shifted during wars, genocidal policies and revolutions. However, this did not impact our connection to our family within the diaspora as we have many cousins and kept in contact over the years. Although throughout the years our family's connection to the greater Ukrainian community varied due to marriages to other communities, migration and so forth, our family kept as many of our cultural customs and practices alive (Ukrainian Canadian dialect (language), how to make *pedaheh*, *holopchi*, *borshch* and *goulash* (food), embroidery and dancing), history of the motherland and what being Ukrainian in Canada and the USA was like.

Growing up, I remember the first time someone told me "You look funny and have a weird name. What are you?" It was a strange question and I recall having to ask them what they meant and going home that night from elementary school and asking my parents "What am I?". It was interesting to me that without even explaining what I meant my mother knew and answered. She said something along the lines of "You're more than one ethnicity, but I didn't want you to forget you are Ukrainian. So, I chose your first name Kebrija which means "little girl" and chose to give you our Ukrainian family's last name "Kottick" which used to be written differently, but that's a story for a different day...Our family endured hardship for being Ukrainian, faced racism, discrimination and yet survived. I knew you would face trouble because of this, but I knew you would be a strong girl and knew you would be strong enough to carry a name with a lot of meaning and responsibility. The responsibility to not forget where and who you came from and I hyphenated "Kottick" with your father's because I want you to always remember his ancestry, but also your responsibility to be a bridge, to close gaps." At the time I was pretty confused, but as I got older a lot of what my mom said to me at that time made sense. Carrying a Ukrainian



name is a symbol of resilience and survival of Ukrainians in the diaspora and one that helps maintain family and communal connections.

After barely surviving foster care, I had to attend a French Catholic elementary school in Ottawa. This meant a name like mine stuck out like a sore thumb and for a young child carrying personal trauma & intergenerational trauma and being poor there were layers of difficulties I faced both at home and at school. I found solace in sports & languages and when my mom noticed an affinity to languages she gave me two books; one book was a dictionary similar to the one from "umcontario.com/trunk-tales"; it belonged to my great-great-grandmother. The second book was a Russian Cyrillic exercise book, my mom told me I would need to teach myself how to read Cyrillic if I wanted to know what the dictionary said, so I did and that's how I learned to read and write Cyrillic (even if I didn't always know what I was reading). This was a core memory of mine because at that time my mom started practicing with me what she remembered as a child. This made me really want to learn more Ukrainian and gave me a sense of pride having seen how happy my mom was that I was learning, but also how sad she was because she didn't know more. Which made me acknowledge the importance of keeping a language alive as it allows for not only more opportunities, but also to see and understand the world differently as it's connection is connected to the land and the people you come from.

A little later on, my mom brought me to this little building on a street off of Bronson Avenue in Ottawa, so that I could get signed up for language class on Saturdays. In the hallway there were tables all lined up and I went up to the Ukrainian table and I introduced myself. The representatives were a first generation Ukrainian Canadian and a Ukrainian newcomer from Ukraine who didn't understand me and tried to correct what I had just said thinking I misspoke. Being noticeably embarrassed, my mother stepped in and explained that we spoke a different dialect, but they stated they had never heard of any dialects in Canada other than standard Ukrainian. This high-



# alive in the diaspora

Students' Club at Humber College



lighted another importance of maintaining Ukrainian culture in the diaspora not only in Canada, but worldwide because it would seem this history had never been taught to them. Years later, I found out there are many different dialects of Ukrainian within the Ukrainian diasporas worldwide and that given my family immigrated during the first and second waves the Ukrainian my mother learned from her great-grandmother and what I learned from the dictionary were a dialect known as Canadian Ukrainian — a dialect that used to be common in the Canadian prairies, originating from parts of Western Ukraine and parts of Poland where it was spoken and brought to Canada by peasant settlers at the end of the 19th century; therefore, making it one of the oldest heritage languages in Canada.

However, given the difficulties Ukrainians from the first waves of immigration faced due to forced closure of Ukrainian language schools, churches and independent press and so on in Canada, “a persistent failure of transmission to the next generation [arose]. Although numerous efforts [were and are being] made by the Ukrainian community to maintain standard Ukrainian in Canada, i.e. bilingual schools, summer camps, university courses, the younger generation of Ukrainian Canadians learn it as a foreign language and this limits its use to family and school settings. Such tendency fosters language shift and puts the Canadian Ukrainian dialect on the brink of extinction in the nearest future” (Ukrainian language in Canada: From prosperity to extinction? - Khrystyna Hudyma, University of Saskatchewan, 2011).

Fast forward to highschool, I met a few other Slavic students (Polish, Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian, Czech and Russian), but the few that opened up about being descendents of Ukrainians from early waves knew nothing and/or very little about their language, family origin, cultural practices and/or history.

I shared what I knew with them and not only did it feel good to give back a small piece of our shared history, but later on I saw that

for some they started looking into their family history and reconnecting in their own ways.

During that same time in highschool, our history teacher one year was speaking about WW1 & WW2, about Internment camps and different communities contributions to the Canadian military, but never mentioned WW1 internements or treatment of Ukrainians, the government’s attempt to destroy records that they even existed and/or the mass amount of Ukrainians that fought in the Canadian military.

During one of our classes I cut the teacher off and asked why they weren’t teaching that in class, but were teaching about everything else in between and they simply said they didn’t know much about that and because it wasn’t in the curriculum. The following class they apologized and although it wasn’t in the curriculum they spent half the class verbally explaining Ukrainian history in Canada, the faces of shock was something I won’t forget.

During that same time at my French Catholic high school I saw Muslim students wearing Hijab and assumed it was a safe space to wear a Ukrainian headscarf to school to express my culture, I was wrong. It was early one morning, when another student and I were waiting for the school buses to arrive to meet up with our friend. Suddenly, the school pastor came up from behind us and tore my headscarf off I recall the pain from some of my hairs being ripped out, being in utter shock and anger; an exchange took place and had a Slavic boy of Ukrainian descent that happened to be passing by not stood up for me and vouched for my explanation of our cultural practices, stating he had seen his baba and mother wear a headscarf, I don’t know what would have happened. These experiences from highschool made me realize the importance of having diverse voices within spaces because without them history is often overwritten or forgotten in its entirety.

Collectively these life experiences taught me that keeping Ukrainian experiences and culture alive in the diaspora is something that cannot be done alone and needs to be spoken about actively. Keeping Ukrainian culture alive in the diaspora also acts as a lifeline for Ukrainians in Ukraine and other parts of the world as it allows for us to transmit this collective knowledge to non-Ukrainians so they can understand the importance and impact a certain event is having. The same can be said for Ukrainians of mixed ancestry — those of mixed ancestry have the ability to act like a bridge to the Ukrainian community and inform the greater Ukrainian community what other communities are facing and how we can help.

If Ukrainians of the diaspora don’t actively teach others, ourselves and our descendents about our clothing, language (dialects and standard), culture, family lineage, food, history of Ukraine, Canada and other nations that house Ukrainians we will be vulnerable to erasure, losing invaluable knowledge of our elders and ancestors that came before us, allowing history to repeat itself and being unable to defend not only ourselves, but other communities that may face similar systemic oppression and discrimination.

# Ukraine and the European Union

By Andrew Shwec, Ukrainian Students' Club at York University

On Feb. 28, 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signed an official request to join the European Union (EU), beginning a long and complicated process of accession.<sup>1</sup> This request was signed on the fifth day of Russia's renewed aggression against Ukraine, causing many western leaders to realize the urgency of the situation in Ukraine. Ukraine is located between the European powers and Russia, which has caused much of the nation's history to be a decision of whether to find allies in the West or East.

One of the earliest instances of the east-west conflict in Ukraine was in 1253, when King Danylo Romanovych acknowledged the Pope as the head of the Church in exchange for Papal armies to assist with the liberation of Rus' lands from the Mongol Horde.<sup>2</sup> This move was met with some resistance from his nobles as they saw this as a betrayal of their Orthodox faith. This dilemma continued into the Cossack period, when Ivan Vyhovsky signed the Hadiach Treaty in 1658 which would have incorporated the Hetmanate into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (the treaty never materialized).<sup>3</sup> *Hetmans* succeeding Vyhovsky would go on to debate and battle over whether to pursue relations with the Latin West or Orthodox Muscovy. In the flames of the First World War, the newly

independent Ukrainian State was forced to seek allies to secure its independence. Again, the choice was between Pavlo Skoropasky's pro-Russian policy, or Symon Petliura's alliance with Poland.

On Dec. 1, 1991, with the collapse of the tyrannical Soviet Union well underway, 90 per cent of Ukrainians (with an 84 per cent turnout) voted for independence from Moscow.<sup>4</sup> In comparison with other post-Soviet republics, Ukraine enjoyed a fair amount of liberalization and moderate economic success, however in comparison with the Baltic States, who joined NATO and the EU in 2004, it was well behind on its Europeanization process. The sluggish journey to European standards of living was caused by Ukraine's oligarch class, which in the process of transitioning to a market economy bought up many public institutions and corporations and wished to protect their wealth. Ukraine until 2013 remained a non-aligned state, however it was gradually shifting its allegiance to the west and EU. This came to a grinding halt in November 2013 when pro-Russian president Victor Yanukovich backed out of signing an association agreement with the EU under heavy pressure from Moscow. Mass demonstrations on Kyiv's Independence Square followed as protestors wished to pursue a closer relationship with Europe, as this meant better wages, pensions, worker's protections, social security, and an-

ti-corruption legislation. As over one million Ukrainians came to Kyiv to demonstrate against the Yanukovich government, the regime became desperate and killed close to 100 demonstrators who became known as the Heavenly Hundred.<sup>5</sup> As Yanukovich fled Ukraine to Rostov-na-Donu, so too did any potential for Ukraine's alignment with Russia.

Post-Maidan Ukraine's clear western orientation is represented in three policies. The first was Petro Poroshenko's Decommunization policy in 2015 which banned Nazi and Soviet symbolism, launched a mass renaming of streets and institutions, and opened Soviet archives.<sup>6</sup> This ban on extremist symbolism and a breaking of Ukraine's history from Soviet history marked a clear break from the Russian world. The second policy was the renewing of the association agreement between the EU and Ukraine which promotes deeper political ties, stronger economic links, and the respect for common values.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, Zelensky's war on Ukrainian oligarchs reached its height right before Russia's full invasion of Ukraine. The pinnacle of this deoligarchization was the charging of pro-Russian oligarch Viktor Medvedchuk with "high treason for providing information to Russia and attempting to steal national resources in Crimea."<sup>8</sup>

These policies, along with Vladimir Putin's full invasion of Ukraine led to the European

parliament endorsing Ukraine's application to join the economic union. While this is the first step in Ukraine's journey in joining the EU, the road toward full membership is long and uncertain. The first roadblock is the requirement of all EU members states to unanimously approve every step of the process for Ukraine's application, which could prove difficult as not all members are supportive of Ukraine, as Hungary has previously blocked military aid to travel to Ukraine through their borders. The next challenge is that even with immense progress in recent years, Ukraine has not met all the requirements of the Copenhagen Criteria. Finally, allowing Ukraine to fast track its EU membership would be seen as unfair in states such as "North Macedonia and Albania, who have been candidates for 17 and eight years, respectively."<sup>9</sup> Others would argue that these countries should be fast tracked towards membership alongside Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine, escalated by the Kremlin, continues to take the lives of innocent Ukrainians, and ruin a nation that was advancing toward a European future. As Ukrainians continue to fight for their survival and existence, the endorsement of Ukraine to join the EU by the European parliament is another gesture by the western world that it stands with Ukraine and a beacon of hope for Ukrainians that a bright future awaits their country after the war.

1. <https://kyivindependent.com/hot-topic/explainer-when-can-ukraine-get-eu-membership/>

2. <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/display.asp?linkpath=pages%5CD%5CA%5CDanyloRomanovych.htm>

3. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Cossacks>

4. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/Independent-Ukraine>

5. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Maidan-protest-movement>

6. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/20/ukraine-decommunisation-law-soviet>

7. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/ukraine/>

8. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2021/06/22/ukraine-s-volodymyr-zelenskyy-speeds-up-corruption-crackdown-one-oligarch-at-a-time>





# Collective responsibility and community commitment

By Michaela Yarmol-Matusiak

I am positive everyone has seen some of the appalling treatment racialized communities in Ukraine have been experiencing during this time of war. Many of the instances of racism, harassment, and prejudiced treatment have occurred at border crossings or in catastrophe zones; though many have been able to cross, find housing, or receive assistance in their given locations sans harassment or discrimination, we cannot ignore the reality of these lived experiences. Though racial hierarchies and the social construction of race differ depending on the cultural and historical context one is situated in, racism and white supremacy unjustly persist around the globe, from

Canada, to America, to Eastern Europe. We do a disservice to Ukrainian communities and individuals of colour when we do not recognize their experiences of oppression and racism as valid. We must confront the reality that race and racism is a large factor in the unequal treatment of migrants and refugees.

Additionally, other minoritized groups such as the LGBTQIA+ community and people with disabilities are also facing dangerous and precarious situations such as ableism, homophobia and further aggression and persecution under potential pro-longed Russian occupation. At this moment, it is critical that we amplify the experiences and risks minoritized communities in Ukraine are enduring, hear their testimonies, and understand that we share a

## Resources:

BIPOC, Slavic, LGBTQIA+ Ukrainian Refugee Resources – <https://linktr.ee/ksvarnon>

List of Ukrainian community based feminist, queer, youth, disability and Roma organizations – [https://docs.google.com/document/d/17YU5\\_GHd2\\_jPddqbstlLEzy-KGJo5Jo1GT06D6j6K8/edit#heading=h.dcbnsa3gkhu8](https://docs.google.com/document/d/17YU5_GHd2_jPddqbstlLEzy-KGJo5Jo1GT06D6j6K8/edit#heading=h.dcbnsa3gkhu8)

Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies: Race and Diversity Webinar in Today's Ukraine: Challenges and Opportunities – [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT98QKzL0Hs&ab\\_channel=CanadianInstituteofUkrainianStudies](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT98QKzL0Hs&ab_channel=CanadianInstituteofUkrainianStudies)

Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University: The Time Is Now: Connecting Euromaidan and Black Lives Matter – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQrJtnSscUo>

continuing, collective responsibility to one another.

We cannot ignore the reality that though we are working to make our Ukrainian community here in Canada a safe and welcoming space, homophobia, racism, sexism, ableism and xenophobia persist. This is my call to us, the youth: it is our role, as inheritors and members of this community, to work in whatever ways we can to ensure everyone is given the space and respect they deserve. We must

each take on, individually and collectively, commitments to critical self-reflection, education through workshops, films, class, or books, and holding peers, family and our community institutions accountable.

If anyone is looking for more information or resources on race, ethnicity, and racism in Ukraine or in the Ukrainian Canadian community, do not hesitate to reach out to me at [inclusion@susk.ca](mailto:inclusion@susk.ca). Our Advocacy Committee has resource lists available.

## Maxime Bernier — Putin's puppet

By SUSK Alumni

Over the last few days, we have been shocked and appalled to read Maxime Bernier's comments directly contradicting the efforts of Canadian politicians to support Ukraine during the ongoing Russian invasion. These efforts are spitting in the face of a united political effort to support Ukraine. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Bernier, the leader of the People's Party of Canada (PPC), has stood against the 1.4 million Ukrainian Canadians, and the 44 million directly under attack in Ukraine. His words and comments spread disinformation and enable authoritarian leaders such as Vladimir Putin to continually violate the human rights of millions of innocent civilians. The prompt

response to Russia's war against Ukraine has received unanimous support from the elected officials of the Canadian government. As you can see below, Candice Bergen, interim leader of the Conservative party, called to remove Russia Today off Canadian airwaves. Bernier stood against the call to action, enabling Vladimir Putin to continue to spread disinformation and propaganda about what is happening in Ukraine.

On Feb. 27, 30,000 people from the GTA, of all political views and ethnocultural backgrounds stood together in support of Ukraine's freedom, and against Russia's disregard for territorial integrity, democracy, and basic human rights.

Bernier, who according to the PPC website has "belief in personal responsibility and freedom at the heart of his political vision,"

has shown that he refuses to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people who are fighting for their freedom. Instead, he enables anti-Ukrainian propaganda and attacks those supporting Ukraine.

The slogan "Glory to Ukraine," as seen on a black and red scarf at the rally, is a national salute, that stands at the heart of Ukraine's defense of not only their territorial sovereignty, but also the soul of its people. It is chanted by Ukrainians and non-Ukrainians alike. On March 1, Ukraine's Jewish President Volodymyr Zelensky and the President of the European Council chanted "Glory to Ukraine" – "Glory to its heroes" at an emergency hearing on Ukraine.

Bernier's statements demonstrate either blatant ignorance, or that he is a pawn of Russian pro-

paganda. When Canada and the world stand united with Ukraine, it is completely inexcusable to stand against them, helping enable a tyrannical despot to continue his attempted genocide of the Ukrainian people, particularly when all other political parties in Canada stand united.

We call on Bernier to immediately: Publicly condemn Putin's war against Ukraine; Publicly denounce Russia Today as a propaganda station that has no right to be on Canadian television; Issue a public apology to the 1.4 million Canadians who identify as Ukrainians, and #StandWithUkraine, during one of the most difficult times for Ukrainian people in the world; Publicly apologize for branding the patriotic slogan "Glory to Ukraine" as a Nazi slogan.



# Born and raised in Canada, heart and soul in Ukraine

By Danya Pankiw

As I sit in my home in Toronto, Canada, all I can think about is Ukraine and its people. It's beautiful, spirited and innocent people. Today is day 23. That's 23 days of war crimes being committed by the Russian regime in Ukraine. When the bombing began on February 24, I could not sleep, my head felt as though it was in the clouds, and I couldn't understand what I was seeing on the news. 23 days later, my thoughts have not changed. As our Ukrainian Canadian community advocates for support, the rest of the world watches as World War III emerges; the largest war in Europe since the second world war, and the largest refugee crisis to date.

**I was born and raised in  
Canada, but my heart and  
soul are in Ukraine**

I have been trying to write this article for the past few days, and have found it extremely challenging. Not because I have nothing to say on this topic, but simply because I cannot find the words to do justice to what I am feeling, what my family and friends are feeling, and what each and every person in Ukraine is feeling right now. I know what I want to say, but I can't express it. I know how I feel every morning, when I wake up in a startle from a nightmare about Ukraine, only to be reminded that it's reality, but I can't put words to it. Throughout each day I experience so many emotions that I can't decipher what they are.

I was born and raised in Canada, but my heart and soul are in Ukraine.

Growing up, I spent my weekends attending Ukrainian school and Ukrainian scouts and my summers were spent at Ukrainian summer camp. At Ukrainian school we learned about Ukraine's history, geography, culture, literature and religion. Each Saturday morning I was not pleased when my

parents would wake me up early and send me off for a sixth day of classes that week. Now I am grateful for going to Ukrainian school because I am well versed in Ukraine's history, one that I watch flash before my eyes. I am familiar with our culture, something that will not disappear, as much as Putin tries to erase it. And I am well read in Ukrainian literature and famous poets, who are the backbone of our deeply rooted culture. At summer camp we would come together each night around the "vatra" and sing songs of mourning and exile. Lyrics that describe what our ancestors lived through, and what Ukrainians are living through again right now. As I've been listening to these songs during many sleepless nights, the lyrics bring me comfort. Comfort because Ukraine has been invaded for centuries, and always prevails.

Whenever I meet new people and make new friends outside of the Ukrainian community, the first thing I say is something along the lines of "Hi my name is Danya and I am Ukrainian." This has always been the way that I introduce myself, and I have never thought twice about it.

My grandparents were born in Ukraine and each have a unique story of how they immigrated to Canada. Because of their different immigration stories, I have family in South America, The United States of America, and different provinces in Canada.

My dido on my tato's side was born in Perevoloka, a village in Ternopil Oblast, with a population of about 2,368 people. World War II began when he was 15 years old. At different periods of time throughout the war, his village was occupied by both the Germans and Russians. For long periods of time he hid in the woods and would sneak back to his mom once in a while, when it was safe, for provisions.

He was taken prisoner of war twice, the first time by England and the second time by Yugoslavia. After the war was over, he was stranded in Austria. The Allies were trading prisoners of war with The Axis, he would've



been caught and traded as Stalin's prisoner of war and would have either been sent to Siberia or executed. He often told my tato this was a very difficult time, he didn't have any food or clean clothes. Often he had to beg farmers for food and rifle through their garbage to survive.

**I am familiar with our culture,  
something that will not  
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tries to erase it**

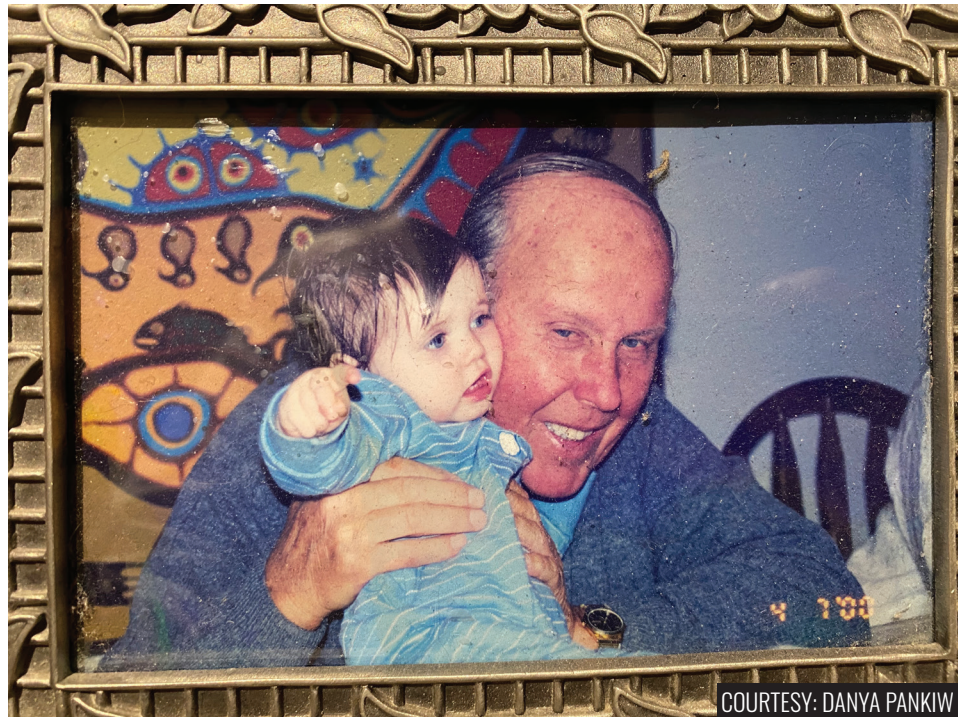
He spent two years in Germany and worked for a farmer while being registered in a displaced persons camp. At this time the west was going through an industrial revolution and Canada needed workers. Taking this opportunity, my dido got on a boat for 2 long weeks and made his way to Halifax, Nova Scotia. From there they sent him on a train into Northern Manitoba where he fulfilled a two year contract with the Canadian government working in a gold mine. This is the place where he met my baba, and a few



months after meeting they got married and moved to Toronto.

The decision to leave Ukraine and come to Canada was heartbreaking. My dido had to leave his mother and three siblings behind the iron curtain. With the end of the war, his village became a part of the Soviet Union. The Russians came to his village to account for all of the inhabitants. When his mother couldn't explain why her son was not there, they sent his mother and brother Ivan to Siberia and burnt their house down. As I watch the news unfold about the war in Ukraine, I think about my family. Those who my dido had to leave behind when coming to Canada. I am humbled by my privilege of being born here in Canada. And pray for my family left in Ukraine each day.

My dido passed away in 2000 at the young age of 75, although he is dearly missed by my family everyday, we are grateful that he is not here with us today to watch history repeat itself. The reason why the first language I learned was Ukrainian, and why I introduce myself as a Ukrainian, is due to the strong Ukrainian community that our ancestors built for us in Canada. The community that my dido worked hard to help build. It is this community that brings us together everyday, and over the past 23 days more than ever. There is this unspoken patriotism and connection that we all silently understand. Those who have been oppressed



COURTESY: DANYA PANKIW

Danya Pankiw and her dido, who helped strengthen the Ukrainian community Pankiw grew up in and who Pankiw remembers fondly during this latest time of war in Ukraine.

through generations and centuries hold an implicit connection.

Our Ukrainian pride runs through our blood and deep in our bones, and with each passing day, the holes in our hearts grow bigger and bigger.

As the world sits back and watches his-

tory repeat itself, Ukraine continues to inspire the world and show how resilient and courageous its people are. Although I have struggled to decipher how I have been feeling over the past 23 days, one thing I am confident in is this: I have never been more proud to be Ukrainian.



## RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

#STANDWITHUKRAINE | #SOUTENEZLUKRAINE | #ПІДТРИМАЙУКРАЇНУ,

### RESOURCE PAGE:





# Вибух за вибухом

By Dariya-Mariya Petryshyn

*This poem came to me on the Tuesday after this war against Ukraine began. I was walking home from my class and my mind kept going back to the videos I saw the first few days of the war. Particularly the videos of children saying goodbye to their fathers and brothers as they boarded buses from towns and cities in the East and fled to western Ukraine and Western Europe. After seeing so many of these videos, I started to think up poem ideas; to tell the story through the eyes of those children fleeing war. This poem is titled (translated) "Explosion after explosion" because this is what all of Ukraine heard and felt in the early hours of Feb. 24, 2022; a day that forever changed life in Ukraine and the world as we know it.*

Вибух за вибухом  
Москаль нападає,  
Мама, батько та братик  
Кричать заховатись.

«Ховатись в підвалах,  
Не панікувати,  
Україна є сильна!  
Нема причини боятись!»

Вибух за вибухом, ми сидимо у підвалі  
Ні світла, ні вікна, тут страшно, насправді.  
Вночі я не сплю, молюсь за Україну  
Щоб нікого не вбили, не зазіхнув ворог на мою Батьківщину.  
І так я лежу і в думки питаю: «а що буде завтра?»  
Лиш відповідь: прірва, ні в ліво, ні в право

Вибух за вибухом, ми вже втекли із хати,  
У сховищах, в підвалах, нам щодня ховатись.  
Сьогодні сказали жінкам та дітям втікати  
До Польщі, Румунії, де не будь на захід.  
Я, Батько, Мама і Тарас, мандруємо полем втікаєм до  
Польщі,  
Все ближче підходжу і ось він автобус.  
Як глянь я на Маму, а в неї вже сльози  
Задумалась рідна і гірко сльоза потекла, я знаю що Маму  
мою щось тривожить.

Вибух за вибухом, Москаль не зупиняє  
Вже вбив невинних дітей, цивільних людей, і далі їм щось  
не вистачає.

На автобуси черги, людей незлічити, тисячі, мільйони  
втікають хто зна куди

Тарасе кричить «Залишаюсь Воювати»  
В мамі сльози течуть, Батько сумно всміхнувся, він знімає  
мені капелюшок, обнімаючи, цілує шепоче:

«Я тебе люблю Даруся, тримайся лебедонько. Я з вами не  
їду, лишаюся тут, воювати за нашу Україну.»

Цілує мене в щічку, сильно обнімає, а я кричу, плачу, не  
знаю що сказати.

Вибух за вибухом, вся станція трясеться,  
Всюди крики, та плачі а мій батько гнеться.  
В обнімку із Батьком, із Мамою, Тарасом, прощаємся ще  
раз, з гіркими сльозами.  
Автобус готовий уже від'їжджати, до зустрічі знову мої  
любі Батько та брате Тарасе!

Вибух за вибухом, довкола тільки жінки та діти, де світова  
допомога, скільки ще будем чекати?  
Україно моя, ти красива країна, скоро знову ми вернемся  
на нашу батьківщину.  
З нами Бог і нехай Всевишній Україну оберігає,  
Це наші герої, наші війська, наші люди, щоб горя ніколи не  
знали!

Вибух за вибухом, нон-стоп стріляють,  
В моєї мамі на руках я якось засинаю...

Слава Україні! Героям Слава!

В своїй поемі я вживаю слово "москалі," так як понад 200  
років тому назад, писав наш Великий Геній і Пророк Тарас  
Шевченко: "Кохайтесь чорнобриві та не з москалями, бо  
москалі лихі люди роблять лихо з вами..."

*Dariya-Mariya Petryshyn is a first-year law student at Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland. She is a Ukrainian-Canadian from Winnipeg, Man., with family ties to Lviv, Ukraine.*

VIA AP IMAGES



# Ukrainian solidarity in Canada has not yet died

By Tyan Cherepuschak, University of Victoria  
Ukrainian Students' Society

Shche ne vmerla Ukrajinu (Ukraine has not yet died), and nor has Ukrainian solidarity in Canada.

For many of us, war feels closer to home than ever before. No matter your connection to Ukraine — whether you have family and friends there, or if it is simply the place of your ancestors that you one day wish to visit—the destruction of a country we are all emotionally connected to yet physically separate from is heart-wrenching. This feels all too real. As Ukrainians face violence, destruction, and displacement, this time isn't easy for anyone.

I wish none of this were happening. I also wish that my involvement in the Ukrainian-Canadian community hadn't begun in a time characterized by military build-up and invasion, but so it has. Just months ago, I couldn't have imagined such an invasion, and now I find myself anxious to catch The National each night to see what new destruction has taken place, thankful for the safety we have in Canada. It's hard to sit still from the other side of the world and know what happens elsewhere, especially when it happens in a place close to our hearts.

## With each new generation of Ukrainians entering Canada, this community has been enriched

I know that Ukrainian solidarity in Canada is alive and well, and this is reassuring. Such solidarity includes that between Ukrainians-Canadians ourselves as well as between ourselves and other Ukrainians worldwide. In the past weeks, we have seen encouraging support from non-Ukrainian Canadians, as well. From the aid and supplies sent Ukraine-bound to the millions of dollars donated by Canadian people, Canada is on Ukraine's side. And from vigils at churches to demonstrations in the streets, this support is clear nationwide.

Ukrainian solidarity in Canada is no new thing. From our collaborative relations with Indigenous peoples and other Settler peo-



ples in early homestead communities to our involvement in 20th Century labour movements in cities across the country, we have a history to be proud of. Canada is home to many Ukrainian cultural organizations, has preserved Ukrainian traditions even when such traditions were under threat in Europe, and has been a source for anti-Soviet and pro-independence activism on behalf of Ukraine. And with each new generation of Ukrainians entering Canada, this community has been enriched.

Presently, a new cause has appeared before us. History is in the making as our beloved Ukraine faces a humanitarian crisis (one that, still in its earliest days, is unclear how large it will be), and it appears as though the newest generation of Ukrainian-Canadians may be one of refugees. With activist experience behind us and with ongoing support from our fellow Canadians, Canada has the potential to step up its support of Ukraine and become a leader on this front. We require contributions from everyone who is involved in our community to be most effective, which I'm hopeful we can do. Certainly, the other authors in this edition of Student will share their ideas of how we, as students, can make a difference.

Looking into the future, the Ukrainian-Canadian

community will be larger than ever before. On one hand, every Canadian (Ukrainian or not) who stands in solidarity with Ukraine is welcome in our community; as well, many families fleeing the war may wish to settle in Canada. We must do all we can to welcome members of this new chapter of Ukrainian-Canadian with open arms. Our community is made of people whose ancestors made journeys across the Atlantic in search of a better life; for many, Canada continues to be this place.

## Ukrainian solidarity in Canada has not yet died because it lives in each of us

Ukraine is at the centre of media and political attention right now. The circumstances are unfortunate, but our resources extend greatly beyond their normal range because of this. Even from the other side of the world, there is much we can do to resist Russian imperialism, counter disinformation, and support Ukrainian self-determination.

Ukrainian solidarity in Canada has not yet died because it lives in each of us.

Slava Ukraini! Gloire à l'Ukraine! Glory to Ukraine!

# Thoughts on the war in Ukraine

By Hillary Derewianchuk

I have never been to Ukraine.

I have never touched its soil, seen the Black Sea or held the wheat it grows in my hands

But my heart is there

It beats and thrives in the culture that I have grown to love; dancing, pysanka, kolomaykas, beautiful, embroidered blouses and red boots

And it is breaking as Putin wages war on this land that I have never been to but is my ancestral homeland

It breaks for the children whose lives have been up-rooted

the people who will never see their loved ones again

those who have answered the call to defend their homeland like our ancestors before them

It breaks for those who live safely in Canada but haven't slept since the start of this God-forsaken war, worried every text they receive from loved ones may be their last

It breaks for all Ukrainians who have fought so hard over history to have a free sovereign country

But somehow my broken heart still beats

It beats for all the people who are showing support for Ukraine anyway they can through rallies, donations, and posts

It beats for the Russians who defy their government despite the risks, telling Putin he is wrong

It breaks for all the battle worn men and women who get up every morning with more bravery than I could ever hope to have

My breaking yellow and blue heart will never stop beating and I wait for the day this war ends so it can be whole once more

As I fight tears, my fellow Ukrainians fight Russians with raging bullets, missiles and bombs

I will never give up; Ukraine will never stop fighting

Glory to Ukraine, Glory to the Heroes



*Hillary Derewianchuk is a third-year biology student at Brandon University.*