

## **Yuriy Badzyo (1936–2018) — Ukrainian socialist dissident**

*“Not doubting that after the search (February 1979) and seizure of the manuscript of the (unfinished) dissident monograph ‘The Right to Live’ arrest was inevitable, my wife and I walked the streets near our house late at night and discussed the situation. What to convey to the world, how to formulate your position, asked the wife. I had the formula ready: humanism, patriotism, democracy, socialism. It is in this sequence that it is essential, I emphasized.” (“The poplars are mobilising...”, interview with Yuriy Badzyo for the website of Nasha Ukraina, 2 June 2013)*

*In the coming month, we will publish articles on Ukrainian history, which are intended to clarify the democratic and often even social-democratic background of the Ukrainian struggle for independence. We commence with a contribution by Vladyslav Starodubtsev about Yuriy Badzyo*

*Yuriy Badzyo was one of the most prominent Soviet dissidents of Ukrainian descent and also one of the last political prisoners in the Soviet Union. He was both a democrat and a socialist and was one of many who advocated for national independence back in Soviet times. In 1979, Yuriy Badzyo was arrested for his text “The Right to Live”. Although the manuscript was confiscated, a summary could be published in the West. Badzyo was finally released in December 1988.*

### **Early life & biography**

Badzyo was born into a peasant family in the small village Kopynivtsi in the Zakarpattia region in 1936. His village was governed by several different states in his lifetime, changing from Czech rule to Hungarian, Soviet, and finally to Ukrainian. He remembers: “In the birth certificate, I am ‘Jirji’ (Czech government), then ‘Djort’ (Hungarian government), in the Soviet passport ‘Djort’ becomes ‘Georgiy’ (in independent Ukraine I regained my natural name – Yuriy).” His younger years were spent in times of war, while his youth unfolded in a new state with new rules as Zakarpattia was annexed by the USSR. Although Badzyo did not

have many memories of the war, he specifically mentions the persecution of the Jews: "... the gendarmes take away the entire Jewish family, our neighbours; I hear from the villagers how the Hungarian authorities educate us: 'if you eat Hungarian bread - speak Hungarian'" ("The poplars are mobilising...", interview with Yuriy Badzyo for the website of Nasha Ukraina, 2 June 2013).

In the Soviet Union, Badzyo was able to get an education in Ukrainian language and literature. He completed his studies at Uzhgorod State University in 1958 and subsequently became a teacher of Ukrainian language and literature. Badzyo also had a good knowledge of the German language and later even translated Irmgard Keun's *Das kunstseidene Mädchen* into Ukrainian. All of this paved the way for Badzyo to have a successful career, especially since he was a member of the Communist Youth and subsequently joined the Party. However, very early on, he criticized the educational system in private letters, saying that the lessons were "stuffed with Marxism", and he later energetically criticized Stalin after the XX<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) — with the more orthodox Communist Youth arguing against such a position. "The cult of Stalin's personality – is it not related to our system in general? I have to think" he noted in 1956. And soon after: "The root of the cult of personality lies in fetishization, socialist despotism, in fetishization, [the] deification of the Party" ("The poplars are mobilising...", interview with Yuriy Badzyo for the website of Nasha Ukraina, 2 June 2013).

Dreaming of an academic career, he applied for an aspirantship (postgraduate) in Kyiv in 1961. He was one of the best students, and his works were already widely admired—with his diploma being nominated as the best in the region.

### **Dissident movement**

In Kyiv, Badzyo met with dissidents, who were later to be called the "1960s generation". While he worked with the dissident poet Vasyl Stus, who was also a good friend, his first serious "dissident action" was on the historic day of 1965, the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, at the premiere of the Ukrainian film "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" (*Tini zabutykh predkiv*). At the end of the film, Ukrainian dissident Ivan Dzyuba went to the middle of the stage and spoke of the ongoing arrests of political activists in Soviet Ukraine. He was then joined by

Vasyl Stus and Vyacheslav Chornovil. The speech finished with a call: “*Those, who are against arrests, stand up!*” in response to which, a third of the attendees in the cinema rose to their feet and, among them, was Yuriy Badzyo. Before this engagement, Badzyo was an organizer of the first Ukrainian informal literature club, which was deemed “anti-Soviet”. After the protest in the cinema, he was expelled from his aspirantship, denied scientific work, and kicked out of the Communist party. For some time, he tried to renew his academic career and participated in the dissident movement on a more passive basis.

**Interviewer:** In your opinion, what is common and what is different between the anti-Ukrainian forces of the Soviet era and the period of independent Ukraine?

**Badzyo:** What they have in common is the attempt of the Russian Empire to absorb us not only politically, but also culturally, i.e. assimilate, denationalize (...) – to consolidate and legitimize the Russification of the past.

What is new here now is an anti-Ukrainian policy under the banner of democracy (formally democracy) (...). The preservation of the current level of Russification in the large cities of Eastern and Southern Ukraine splits Ukraine territorially, the prospect of ‘reunification’ with Russia is obvious here. This is evidenced by sociological surveys during all the years of our independence, as well as the political situation in Ukraine in recent years. At the same time, there is an encouraging ideological and political propaganda (the scope for materialization is limitless!) reference point – the epoch-making remark of the President of Russia V. Putin in a conversation with the President of the United States Bush about Ukraine: this is not a state, two-thirds of its territory was a gift from us.

The awakening and maturing of the Ukrainian national consciousness is fiercely resisted by both internal and external political forces, and not only in the eastern direction, as was more than clearly evidenced by the identical reaction of Russia and the West to the (apparently well-founded) criminal case against Y. Tymoshenko, [and] to her imprisonment. Here, it is precisely the West that is more ‘expressive’ in its attitude to the situation, in the

conversation with the Ukrainian authorities, which openly speaks the language of dictation, grossly neglecting the state sovereignty of Ukraine and its authorities. The Ukrainian situation is currently extremely dramatic, complicated and threatened. Ideologically, politically (personnel, finances, adequate position and behaviour, in short, the absence of an established political class-leadership) and psychologically, we are not ready for it.

I am convinced that Ukraine as a state, as a country, will not become full-fledged, and we will not get out of such a stable crisis, political and economic instability, until we publicly raise the question of what has always been called the 'Ukrainian national question'. That is, the question about the rights of Ukrainians, about the fact that democracy cannot give legitimate rights to hostile activities against us.

And this is exactly what happened as a result of the mechanical application of democratic principles. Then, let's say, the Communist Party of Ukraine, which was banned quite justifiably and justly, suddenly became, without changing its ideology and policy, a legal organization with legal activities. I call this legalization of such a state a 'new conquest of Ukraine'.

You see, earlier it was known that Bolshevik totalitarianism completely eliminated some political and cultural autonomy, which in theory was the Ukrainian Republic, and now these forces do not accept our independence (the Communist Party of Ukraine speaks about this, frankly calling the declaration of independence in 1991 a 'counter-revolutionary act'), they suddenly become a completely legal organization and even more: the authorities consider them a respectable opposition, almost the only real opposition (so it is often declared). This is a terrible paradox.

("The poplars are mobilising...", interview with Yuriy Badzyo for the website of Nasha Ukraina, 2 June 2013)

## **Right to Live: national oppression in the USSR**

In 1971, Badzyo wrote a letter to the praesidium of writers of Ukraine describing the state of Ukrainian literature and culture in Ukraine as being “second-sort” to their Russian counterparts. In 1972, most of the contacts and close friends of Yuriy Badzyo were arrested. Ivan Dzyuba and Vasyl Stus were jailed for their opposition. Vasyl Stus died in a Soviet camp in 1985 while Ivan Dzyuba became a co-founder of the Ukrainian independence movement and the first oppositional democratic party the “People’s Movement”. In the meantime, Badzyo lost all hopes of pursuing an academic career. While he previously was a widely published and renowned literary critic, translator, and editor, his flat subsequently became a place for frequent official and not-so-official visits from the KGB. As was common at the time, Badzyo had more than ten ways to see if someone visited his flat while he was away, which is an aspect that was described in his criminal case by the KGB. In 1972, the KGB raided his flat in connection with the arrest of Ivan Dzyuba and found a letter to writers together with books of the Ukrainian historian and leading head of the independence movement after World War I, Mykhailo Hrushevskiy (1866–1934), which they confiscated. After this raid, he again lost the job he had at the time and subsequently could not obtain any intellectual work, whereby he also faced criminal proceedings if he were to refuse to go to work at a cement factory outside of Kyiv. He found a job as a loader for a bread shop on the night shift and wrote a letter to the KGB, saying that he already has a “hard-working job” and that all complaints of the KGB about work against him should be made public. In this context, it is worth noting that so-called social parasitism was a criminal offence in USSR and dissidents were isolated from most job opportunities and either jailed for “joblessness” or sent to inhospitable work locations to perform hard labour.

From that time, he limited all of his contacts to not put his friends in danger and also for his own safety and secretly started to work on his magnum opus, namely the “Right to Live” which is an all-encompassing critical work on the totalitarian regime and national subjugation. He wrote this book from 1972 onwards in the hopes of it being published in the West, while simultaneously morally preparing for his arrest. As always, in this work, he is guided by a feeling of justice and truth. His approach differed from that of other dissidents who used Soviet terminology to subtly criticize the regime and he wrote in a very direct manner. From 1972 to 1979, the “Right to Live” was his main work. However, as early as the middle of

1977, approximately 1,400 pages and four out of five chapters suddenly “vanished” as Badzyo wrote later. He managed to rewrite large parts of his book again, but in 1979 an official political search was conducted at Badzyo’s home and another 400 pages were confiscated. At this moment, the opportunity to send the manuscript to the West was lost, together with an immense amount of work. The relatively brief period that remained before his arrest was used to write an open letter to the Presidium and Central Committee of the CPSU as a very short summary of his work — to still make a public protest at the last possible moment and tell the world what is going on in Ukraine. Fortunately, this letter was spread in the West by the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. In his letter, Badzyo argued that Lenin’s concept of the rapprochement and thus the death of nations was a nationalist construct. This construct did not stem from a real democratic movement but was ideological and reflected, in real terms, the unequal position of all non-Russians among the peoples of the USSR. Hence, instead of the “extinction of nations”, Russian chauvinism and exceptionalism dominated.

**Open Letter to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Central Committee of the CPSU, 1979 (excerpt)**

The ideological conditions of the historical life of the peoples of the USSR and the implemented national policies of the CPSU are distinguished by an official doctrine that posits the concept of the flourishing and rapprochement of nations. The dominant tendency is considered to be the movement toward rapprochement, and the rapprochement of nations is interpreted as the effacement of national differences, that is, the withering away of nations and the future creation of a nationless communist society.

This ideology, which was created not by an elemental, democratically organized life, but by a politically tendentious doctrine, most clearly reflects the unequal status of the non-Russian peoples of the USSR and embodies the most fundamental form of national oppression. In fact, neither in theory nor in practice does the prospect for the obliteration of nations apply to the Russian people: the theory of the rapprochement and fusion of nations is coupled in the official ideology with the idea of the ‘second mother tongue’ — Russian. The reinforcement of its cultural-historical and political role in the life of the non-Russian peoples is viewed as a supposedly objective, natural development.

This is combined with widespread propaganda about Russian patriotism, the exclusive internationalism of the Russians, their particular contributions to Soviet society throughout its history, and so on. All of this convincingly proves that the source and political substance of the rapprochement and fusion of nations — the ideology of the so-called internationalization of Soviet society — is Russian great-power nationalism. [...]

The idea of the fusion of nations is an acquisition of Leninism, a creation of Lenin. Already at the very beginning, it revealed its dogmatic nature, its great-power bent, and its reactionary essence. The sad reality of the Russian ‘prison of peoples’ demanded social forces that claimed to represent progress, the ideology of the rebirth of nations and the historical, universally human appreciation of the uniqueness of peoples. Instead, Lenin put forward the idea of the fusion of nations, of ethnic assimilation as an objective, progressive natural occurrence in historical development and as an indispensable prerequisite for the socialist transformation of the world. He welcomed the commingling of nations in the ‘American melting pot’ without noticing, for some reason, that this was the misfortune of humanity, a consequence of the disharmonious, antagonistic development of bourgeois civilization, and not an organically created social ideal, not the desire of people or, even more, of entire peoples. [...]

The party’s present nationality policy deprives my people of the right to its past. In present-day Soviet historiography of Ukraine’s history, the dependent, unequal status of the Ukrainian people is manifested most clearly in the official concept of the future of nations: these are but two ends of the policy to restore ‘one, indivisible’ Russia.

Badzyo writes of the tendencies of Soviet historiography to portray Kiyvan Rus as a “common history” of the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian nationalities and use it to assimilate Ukrainians and Belarusians in a common narrative. In this narrative, the Russian nation appeared even before Kyivan Rus, while those of the Ukrainians and Belarusians only arose in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and solely appeared for the purpose of future

“reunification” with Russia. In this context, Badzyo highlights the example of the Soviet historian N.S. Derzhavin who published “The Origin of the Russian People. Great Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian” in 1944. Badzyo argues that “the great-power concept of pre-revolutionary Russian historiography, the Russian chauvinist doctrine, is being restored, a doctrine that denies the existence of Ukrainians and Belarusians as separate ethnic groups”. The voices and ideas of Ukraine as a separate entity from Russia were denounced as “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism” by the Soviets and fought by a large quantity of so-called anti-nationalist literature. All this, Badzyo resumed, “plays a big reactionary role in the international relations of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, harms the relations between Ukrainians and Russians, incites citizens to nationally conscious Ukrainians, arouses suspicion and intolerance to any manifestations of the national dignity of Ukrainians”.

In his letter to the Presidium and CC of the CPSU, Badzyo mentions as many examples of Russification as possible and what he calls “ethnocide” of Ukrainians—direct attempts to destroy Ukrainians as a separate nation. In this context, he especially highlighted the situation in education and the Russification through language politics. For example, even in regions with a majority of Ukrainian-speaking students, only a few university teachers gave lectures in Ukrainian. Hence, “University lectures were read in Ukrainian by only 34 percent of the lecturers”, Badzyo explains, and in the universities in Kharkiv and Odessa”, only 13 and 10 percent of the lectures were delivered in Ukrainian”, although “Ukrainians there constituted 55 percent of the students”. Badzyo used official reports, the census of the USSR, and even a speech of a former minister for higher education for his book “Right to Live” and the open letter. Regarding the universities in Kyiv and Kharkiv, Badzyo stated that these were the only higher education institutions in Ukraine where specialists for state planning and legal organs were educated and their activities – in accordance with the constitution of the Ukrainian SSR – actually had to be conducted in Ukrainian. “At the Kiev Agriculture Institute”, Badzyo writes, “78 percent of the students are Ukrainian; in the last five years, 90 percent of all graduates have been assigned jobs in the Ukrainian SSR, but only 5 percent of them lecture in Ukrainian.”



## **Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence**

Yuriy Badzyo did not change his views while being imprisoned and did not write any humiliating plea for pardon—even when he had such a possibility in the late 1980s. In 1988, under pressure from the West and a new course of reform by Gorbachev’s *perestroika*, Badzyo was released. In that year, he wrote a text entitled “Who is slowing down perestroika, or, will the socialist revolution be victorious against [the] Communist party?” outlining the danger that the organized Stalinist wing of the CPSU posed to reform, together with the threat of Russian chauvinism and totalitarianism. In his perspective, *perestroika* was not a battle that was already won as there was a permanent danger of Stalinist “counterrevolution”, and, most importantly, perestroika did not touch the privileged positions of Russians in national hierarchies, and did not challenge national relations. Hence, for Badzyo, perestroika was a very limited reformation, that came with a threat of the continuation of Russian imperialist policies or even promoted them with newfound strength. For him, the alternative was a socialist revolution (hence the name, Socialist Revolution Against the Communist Party). Badzyo’s letter from 1979 became the precursor to his next important text, entitled the “Program of the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence”.

He develops a broad social-economic criticism of Soviet society, in which the party formed a social class that rules over economic power as a collective capitalist. This comprises a form of society that, for Badzyo, was significantly more reactionary than Western Capitalism in which competing businesses ensure economic polyarchy and not centralized rule. To address the problems of the Soviet Union, he designed a project and wrote a program that should fully implement the notion of having a right to live, and proposes a broad socialist and democratic reform of the Soviet Union together with Ukrainian separation and organization as an independent country. Unfortunately, this program was not implemented—and such a party was not formed, although a moderated and broader program based on this project was subsequently adopted by the Democratic party—which Badzyo co-founded.

The original program starts with a very important analysis of the national angle of perestroika, and dominant Russian chauvinist thinking. Badzyo did not only see the danger of a Stalinist counterrevolution but also the perestroika reform program. Even though it was only presented in contours at that time, Badzyo drew a cautionary and alarming conclusion, namely that the perestroika program, as Badzyo writes, “aims to preserve [the] inviolable decisive historical

achievement of Stalinism – Russia’s position as a great power in the Federation of Soviet Republics”. Badzyo clearly saw the threat to democratic development posed by Russian chauvinism in the Baltic states, and in Ukraine, Great Russian nationalism showed its particular aggressiveness.

**Program of the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence (excerpt 1)**

The first manifestations of national revival and patriotic democratic amateur activity of the non-Russian peoples of the Federation showed that Russian great-power chauvinism has deeply penetrated the consciousness and psychology of its carriers and victims and is one of the organic parts of the old socio-political SYSTEM (along with the class egoism of the party-state) of the mechanism of inhibition of the democratic restructuring of Soviet society.

In the Baltic region, the chauvinist selfishness of the non-indigenous population, organized into the so-called ‘inter-fronts’, reached the point of threats to the Republican government and territorial claims in favour of Russia.

In Ukraine, Russian nationalism and great-power chauvinism have always been marked by particular aggressiveness. The perestroika, which is already four years old, also confirmed this.

In Russia, the voice of the great power is clearly heard both from the official mouths and from among the intelligentsia, and from the element of the general public.

In this text, Badzyo provides a complex analysis of Marxist and Leninist ideologies. He finds a contradiction that paved the way for the Leninist totalitarian interpretation of Marx namely, the abolishing of politics, as in Marxist theory, without class, there is no historic conflict, and no need for a state or democracy. Secondly, he identifies a centralist approach to the economy, which creates a danger of authoritarianism.

His view was logical, as the mistake of a stateless approach was something that ultimately justified the most radical state rule, and hence Badzyo agitated against any anarchist approach. In fact, he directly positioned the role of the democratic state as something to balance democratic conflicts arising from disagreements and its existence as both a pre-condition and final goal of socialism. At the same time, he pointed out that a lack of clear understanding of the direction of social-democratic transformation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries led to overreliance on the state, which could create a possibility for authoritarian interpretations. For Badzyo, bolshevism was the manifestation of such an interpretation.

**Program of the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence (excerpt 2)**

At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, ideologues of the socialist reconstruction of society, including Marxist ideologues, formulated their project as the idea of social democracy. Hence the name of the political parties: social democratic, social democracy. It was about extending the political democracy established by the bourgeois revolutions to the sphere of socio-economic relations – by abolishing capitalist private property and nationalizing the means of production, that is, turning them into the property of the state, which allegedly becomes the expression of the people's interests after the victorious proletarian revolution. The messianic utopian ideal of communism, dressed by the luminaries of Marxism in scientific robes, did not in any way lead to the concretization of ideas about the socialist principles of production, social life in general (...).

The view of the socio-economic foundations of socialism led to political extremism and authoritarianism. Bolshevism became a manifestation of this tendency in Russia. (...)

Democracy involves the coexistence, interaction and confrontation of two forces, two social subjects: the state (state authority) and civil society, the state and the people. According to Marx's theory, the state is an organization of the political power of the ruling class. The proletariat, having defeated the bourgeoisie, becomes the expression of the interests of all workers, exploitation disappears, society turns into a classless one; the need for a state disappears, people's self-government is total, and freedom is all-encompassing. Hence the paradoxical conclusion: democracy (the power of the people) is so broad and comprehensive that it denies itself (as a measure of the

people's sovereignty over state authorities). Democracy is disappearing, dissolving in the self-government of humanity. The idea of the death of the state is the core of the communist ideal. (...)

Lenin considered the dictatorship of the party (its leading role, leading position in the system of political power) as an integral internal element of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as its ideological soul and organizational form. According to the logic of communist theory, with the death of the dictatorship of the proletariat, with its transformation into a 'national state', the dictatorship of the party should also die, and ultimately, the party itself, because communism is a classless society, therefore non-political, socially monolithic, free from confrontations of group social interests: the power that disposes of people is replaced by the power that disposes of things (F. Engels), the state dies, ends up in the dustbin of history.

He described his view on the CPSU as not a political party, but a social class. This was a view that he held for a long time, and which greatly influenced his politics. For Badzyo, the establishment of Stalinism and the party-state was not only a political process but also social and economic development. Workers and peasants, together with technical, cultural and all other labourers became enforced employees of the state while the party became the all-comprehensive and dominating employer.

Speaking about democratic socialism, Badzyo mentions that in relation to the Soviet Union, the Democratic West is far closer to a socialist society than the USSR. For him, socialism is inherently democratic, as socialism is merely an extension of democracy. Hence, the phrase "democratic socialism" is only used for differentiation from "real socialism"—a formation that is closer to "socialist feudalism".

**Program of the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence (excerpt 3)**

Soviet socialism was born and established as an anti-democratic society. The formation of a party dictatorship, the narrowing and nullification of party democracy, and the rise of Stalinism – the process is political and social: political and socio-economic at the same time. Direct producers and workers, peasants, and intelligentsia

– were increasingly alienated from the means of production and became the hired labour force of the state (state-party). Having acquired a monopoly on power and becoming an anti-democratic corporate organization, the party thereby turned into a collective owner of the means of production, and therefore, lost the character of a party and was reborn into a new exploitative social class of society.

Badzyo writes very boldly about the need for a socialist market economy—of state, individual, and cooperative economic actors that will replace centralized planning and private-oriented ownership. His idea was to combine workers’ and consumers’ self-determination in cooperatives with market elements. Planning should thus not play an all-encompassing role in society. However, Badzyo also argued against a simple restructuring of Ukraine’s economy to capitalism because – regarding low productivity and bad infrastructure – this would only lead to the developments we know from the original capitalist accumulation from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, even though Badzyo deemed liberal capitalism more progressive than Soviet socialism, he agitated for a socialist vision. Badzyo very accurately predicted the catastrophic social and economic developments and the power struggles fought out with violence in the 1990s and 2000s. However, although he had no illusions that his program of democratic socialism would find a majority in post-Soviet society, it did not stop him from campaigning. Social democrats, he writes, should not be deterred by this.

**Program of the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence (excerpt 4)**

Democratic socialism opposes ‘bourgeois economic freedom’ – as an equal right to property (and the unequal opportunity to become the owner of the means of production, even more: as the impossibility of being the owner for all direct producers) and affirms the equal opportunity of free management on the basis of equal ownership of the means of production through a democratic state; labour teams and individual producers. In the absence of capitalist private property and in conditions of political democracy, industrial relations are socialized. STATE property becomes the property of the entire society, because the state embodies its will in its activities (since there is no separate dominant social class – the class of owners). COOPERATIVE ownership

(ownership of labour collectives), participating in the formation of the economic market, supports and develops the material interest of the producer and at the same time does not lead to the division of society into owners and hired labour. Individual property, when it realizes itself through the personal labour of the owner, without hired labour, is harmoniously woven into the socialist structure of the economy and represents one of the forms of economic freedom, an economic guarantee of political freedom.

(...) Our Party distrusts attempts to find a way out of society's economic crisis on the way to restoring capitalist private property. In a society dehumanized and deeply affected by bureaucratic atherosclerosis, in a country with a low production culture and a weak social infrastructure, such a path would lead to a repetition of the difficulties of the original capitalist accumulation with all its negative social consequences, first of all, it would lead to a new social-class differentiation of society. It would threaten the Ukrainian people with the weakening of national consolidation, which is still far from complete.

(...) Perhaps democratic socialism will not stand the test of practice, and society will have to return to economic freedom based on capitalist private property. – Such a prospect does not frighten socialist democrats and does not weaken their efforts in the struggle for democratic socialism.

The Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence program also has unusual, but very important positions concerning agrarian and religious questions. It mentions the hostile and politically-motivated role of the Russian Church in Ukraine and calls for support for the Ukrainian church. While the separation of state and church is important, there is an underlying need for secularism and support for religious revival, which was suppressed by the Soviet Union. While the need for secularism and support for religious revival sounds like a contradiction at first, it is not as the Party was non-religious and stood for the separation of the church from the state. However, it understood religion as a normal human activity and demand and considered its revival as “both an important factor and an inevitable consequence of the democratization of society”. Moreover, the development of a national Ukrainian church would be a counterpart to the Russian Orthodox Church which consistently took (and still takes) a chauvinistic and anti-Ukrainian position. In the agrarian question, the Party highlights the need to oppose “capitalism in the village” as something that can disrupt Ukraine's culture

and agrarian way of life, pushing villages into complete poverty, together with hyper-industrializing agrarian life and pushing unhealthy urbanization, with the inevitable subsequent ecological damage. The need is thus to create harmonious relations between nature, villages, and cities, which for the author is impossible under the motive of profit.

In the end, the Program says a lot about the need for Ukrainian independence. State independence would contribute to countering Ukrainian feelings of inferiority, which have developed over centuries, along with the feeling of always being in “second place”. The equal right of independence for Russians, Ukrainians, and any other nations would ultimately benefit relations between the nations. The Russians, in turn, would be freed from their chauvinist attitudes along the way and thus the liberation from Great Russian chauvinism would also be a liberation for Russians and not only for Ukrainians.

**Program of the Ukrainian Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence (excerpt 5)**

We understand that the idea of state independence of Ukraine is psychologically very difficult for Russians and for a part of Russified Ukrainians. But, we believe, this is an argument in favour of the idea, not against it. Without realizing their right (legal and moral) to state independence from Russia and without making efforts to realize it, the Ukrainian people will not be able to straighten up psychologically, wash off the sticky sludge of feelings of secondness, inferiority, the sludge that centuries-old national oppression has left on our bodies. The same goes for the Russians: not having ‘liberated’ from ‘their’ non-republics, in particular from Ukraine; they will not be able to get rid of the ‘elder brother’ (or even ‘father’) complex, which is especially strong for Ukrainians and Belarusians. The democratization of the Ukrainian and Russian Societies requires an appropriate psychological and worldview foundation: a developed sense of internal freedom, and a sense of the equality of people and nations. Propaganda of the principle of the right of nations to self-determination, including the constitutional right to the withdrawal of the Union Republics from the USSR, the promotion of the idea of state independence of the people as a programmatic demand of the civil movement – such a political position, if treated calmly and impartially, can be

considered constructive even in within the framework of the official ideology of perestroika.

## **Against the tide**

The Program of the Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence was not realized. History progressed too rapidly at this stage, and in 1991 Ukraine finally achieved its independence. The radical independence movement, the first Ukrainian modern party—the People’s Movement of Ukraine—participated in the first elections against the candidate of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Kravchuk).

While the People’s Movement started a strong campaign against the Communist Party of Ukraine, with election slogans such as “citizens against partocrats!” Badzyo, from his analysis, did not support such an approach. For him, the Communist Party was a socio-economic class and not a political entity, and as such, it comprised national democrats, as well as supporters of totalitarian and Russian rule. Some ideas from the Program of the Party of Democratic Socialism, while moderated in some way, formed the basis for a new party — the Democratic Party of Ukraine, which took the platform of social democracy and humane socialism, and at the same time supported Kravchuk’s candidacy, and the need to unite all the national forces under Kravchuk — to fight against the threat of Russian chauvinism, and not participate in political conflicts for now.

The People’s Movement opposed Kravchuk’s candidacy as he was a Communist party official, and thus a person who suppressed Ukrainians only a few years before independence. Chornovil, a candidate from the People’s Movement, argued for Ukrainization, bold democratic reforms, the decentralization and transformation of Ukrainian society, and diplomatic reorientation, and in People’s Movement opinion, Kravchuk could only sabotage reforms and change. For the Democratic Party, Kravchuk symbolized an – albeit non-ideal – start for Ukrainian independent statehood, and the Party members argued for a need to support Kravchuk in building new state institutions and to consolidate against radical pro-Russian forces, who attacked Kravchuk at that time. Badzyo, who became the main ideologue for pro-Kravchuk national-democratic forces, argued that the main part of the People’s movement



was so engrossed in the struggle “against” that they forgot about the struggle “for”. In his famous text “Government, Opposition and State of Ukraine Today: Thoughts Against the Tide”, he states that the time to destroy is over, and now it is “time to build” and called for “constructive, not destructive opposition”.

The new Party Program attempted to summarise the various progressive tendencies of Ukrainian history. For instance, the Party referred to the national poet Taras Shevchenko, the democratic-socialist publicists, historians and literary figures Ivan Franko, Lesya Ukrainka, Mykhailo Pavlyk, and finally Mykhailo Hrushevskiy and Volodymyr Vynnychenko, the leading figures of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917–1920. Overall, the new party made an extraordinarily strong reference to the social-democratic labour movement of pre-1917 Ukraine. And remarkably, it even referred to emancipatory motifs also present in the Communist party, as some of its members joined not because of their political beliefs, but simply due to the privileges that party membership gave in the Soviet Union.

**Manifesto of the Democratic Party (excerpt)**

We want to make the ideological basis of the new party the desire of Taras Shevchenko and his colleagues to create a party in the form of the Kyryl and Methodius Brotherhood, we want to adopt the radicalism of Ivan Franko and the social democratism of Lesya Ukrainka. We want to include in our program our national thinking, the state programs of Mykhailo Drahomanov and Mykhailo Pavlyk, Volodymyr Vynnychenko and Mykhailo Hrushevskiy... We will look for good intentions and good motives in the activities of every party, including the Communist Party of Ukraine.

While the new party had moderate success at first, it was gradually infiltrated by more pro-Russian members and subsequently failed. The continuous pro-Ukrainian position of Badzyo meant that he again became a non-partisan intellectual.

Badzyo and his generation of dissidents organized moral, democratic opposition to Soviet totalitarianism, strongly influencing the national and political revival of Ukraine, and

provided all of their intellectual capacities to secure the independence of Ukraine in its most fragile periods.

Badzyo repeatedly warned about the Russian threat to Ukrainian independence. In a 2010 interview, he mentioned a plan of the early Yeltsin administration in which the Eastern parts of Ukraine should return to Russia and the Western Ukrainian lands could be offered a “choice” of whether to become a part of Poland or attain “autonomy” within the geopolitical realities of the time. As Badzyo indicated, Ukraine was lucky and got some more time, if one can say this, because Russia was busy with the first Chechen war. These chauvinist politics was also followed by Yeltsin’s successor – Vladimir Putin. In the same interview, Badzyo said Russia uses the earlier Russification of a large part of the population of Ukraine to gain a reliable bridgehead for its influence in the country. Russia’s strategic goal, according to Badzyo, was “to make the existence of Ukraine as an independent state first a legal and political fiction, and at a convenient moment to split it up”. Today, everybody can see that the Ukrainian critique of Russia was prophetic.

**They want to build in Russia in Ukraine!**

*After Yuschenko, in February 2010 Viktor Yanukovich’s coming to power as president became a real threat to Ukrainian society. Extremely antidemocratic laws were pushed. The famous “language law” promoted by Yanukovich, for a lot of activists, meant a continuation of Russification policies, and his political actions were moving Ukraine into a state of bandit-oligarchic rule with reliance on Russia—similar to what we have now in Belarus. The following passage is an excerpt from an interview with Yuriy Badzyo in 2010 (Yuriy Badzio: “Russia will not let us out of its clutches a second time”, interview with Yuriy Badzio by Olexander Gavrosh, 29 April 2010)*

Interviewer: So, Mr Yuriy, we have the fourth president of Ukraine.

Badzyo: Actually, we have a rematch. And there is every reason to believe that we currently have an occupation administration. And for Ukraine, to a large extent, we can talk about a national awakening, because the repressive policy of the old communist government had as a result the Russification of a large

part of the population of Ukraine. And today's Russia uses this, with the clear goal of gaining a reliable bridgehead for its influence in Ukraine. The strategic goal is to make the existence of Ukraine as an independent state first a legal and political fiction, and at a convenient moment to split it up.

Interviewer: Is everything really so intense?

Badzyo: These ideas are voiced in Russian society both at the level of government and public opinion. What can we say if the notorious Dugin continues to head the department at Moscow University, who openly declares that such an entity as Ukraine is artificial, hopeless and should disappear from the political map of Europe?

Interviewer: And what should happen then?

Badzyo: Back in the early 1990s, Migranyan, who headed a department in Yeltsin's administration, hatched a plan for Central and Eastern Ukraine to return to Russia, while Western Ukrainian lands were to be offered a 'choice': either autonomy in the new geopolitical reality, or become part of Poland. Independence was not foreseen for anyone.

Interviewer: Next year, we will celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence. How would you characterize the development of Ukraine during this time?

Badzyo: The second President, Kuchma [from 1994–2004] went to the elections [in 1994] under the slogan of rapprochement with Russia. With his arrival, a new period in Ukrainian history began. But, in 1994, Ukraine was saved by the Russian aggression against Chechnya, or rather, the Russian-Chechen war. This pushed society away from the idea of rapprochement with Russia and sharply aggravated the situation for Kuchma as well.

I have no doubt that Russia had a strategic goal from the very beginning to restore the status quo of the empire. And Ukraine had very strong not only political and psychological positions but also a ready-made political

environment. And here, the 2003 law on Ukraine's foreign policy was a telling moment in Kuchma's evolution. The law, which announced Ukraine's prospective accession to NATO (Ukraine was supposed to be part of the North Atlantic Alliance in 2008), was decided under Kuchma, and Yushchenko referred to it more than once (...).

Interviewer: Can Yanukovych evolve, as Kuchma did in his time?

Badzyo: He may. Maybe Yanukovych's selfish motive will prevail, and he will gradually realize his responsibility to the state. The Party of Regions unites a whole cohort of serious entrepreneurs. And they are interested in having a market and to be in normal relations with the West, without becoming a province of Russia. But this factor requires an active policy of Ukrainian forces. If this does not happen, then Russia will not release us from its clutches for the second time.

## **Resume**

Badzyo's analysis provides us with a possible alternative vision of Ukraine and with insights concerning the threats of transition to mainstream capitalism while outlining viable alternatives. While at the end of his life, he moderated his views from socialism to general social-oriented views, this does not disqualify the insights and knowledge that Ukrainians can find in his writings.

The program of the Party of Democratic Socialism and State Independence provides an alternative vision of the development of Ukraine and has the prospect of inspiring a new generation of Ukrainian intelligentsia to fight for a just future. Unfortunately, the problems highlighted in the program are still relevant for the most part and are repeatedly raised in Ukrainian society, while the path of chaotic capitalist transition that was taken did not solve most of the country's problems, but rather created new ones. New ways out of the stagnation of neoliberalism need to be found for Ukrainians, and here, Badzyo's analysis and ideas could provide immense help.

Badzyo's strong determination to fight for national freedom, independence, and revival of Ukrainian independent culture as well as his analysis of Russian imperialism and its assimilatory policies is something that could teach modern social democrats, socialists, greens, labour party members, and social and human rights activists a great deal. For him, the threat from Russian imperialism and its ambitions were clear – even long before Putin rose to power, which now provides shocking insights into what was ignored for all of these years – and gives the possibility for us all to reflect on this ignorance.

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