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## Ukraine's Euromaidan in Turkish Media<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*Euromaidan, also known as the Revolution of Dignity, is undoubtedly an epoch-making event in the history of independent Ukraine. The mass protests, which began in Kyiv as a response to the government's sudden decision to abandon the planned signing of landmark agreements with the EU and a short time later spread far beyond the capital of Ukraine, captured the attention of the global community and were widely covered by the world's mass media. Turkey, whose political life has always been full of contradictions, did not stand aside either. The author, who is working at the moment as a translator and contributor to a Turkish news web site, has made an attempt to study how the Euromaidan events were represented in Turkish mass media. The following aspects have been taken into consideration: a) what caused mass protests in Kyiv's Independence Square (both immediate and remote causes were analysed); b) who were mainly Euromaidan participants, how they looked and behaved, how they described their political views and explained their own motives for participation in anti-government protests; c) what was the character of protests and how it changed over time; d) what forces contributed to the continuation of protests; e) the outcomes of the Revolution of Dignity; f) predictions about what "a post-Maidan Ukraine" will look like in the near future.*

**Keywords:** *Euromaidan, Turkey, freedom of speech, civil liberties, independent media outlets, pro-government newspapers, news coverage*

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<sup>1</sup> This is a slightly modified version of the presentation made at the 8th International Sociological Readings in memory of the eminent Ukrainian sociologist Natalia Panina "The Maidan Phenomenon in Ukrainian Society: Sociological Interpretations" (Kyiv, Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 10 December 2014).

As we live in a globalised world, key events in a country's social and political life attract the attention of the world's leading mass media and evoke numerous comments. The Euromaidan, which (like the Orange Revolution) was bound to become a turning point in Ukraine's post-Soviet history, is not an exception in this regard.

Table

### Classification of Turkish mass media by place of publication

Mass media published in Turkey	Mass media published in Turkish beyond Turkey
<p>The print edition of the <i>Turkiye</i> ("Turkey") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr">http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr</a></p> <p>The print edition of the <i>Vatan</i> ("The Motherland") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://gazetevatan.com">http://gazetevatan.com</a></p> <p>The print edition of the <i>Cumhuriyet</i> ("The Republic") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://cumhuriyet.com.tr">http://cumhuriyet.com.tr</a></p> <p>The print edition of the <i>Milliyet</i> ("The Nation") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://milliyet.com.tr">http://milliyet.com.tr</a></p> <p>The print edition of the <i>Hurriyet</i> ("The Freedom") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://hurriyet.com.tr">http://hurriyet.com.tr</a></p> <p>The print edition of the <i>Zaman</i> ("Time") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://zaman.com.tr">http://zaman.com.tr</a></p> <p>The print edition of the <i>Sabah</i> ("The Morning") newspaper. Electronic version is available at: <a href="http://sabah.com.tr">http://sabah.com.tr</a></p> <p><i>Anadolu Ajansi</i> ("Anatolia" news agency) web site. Available at: <a href="http://aa.com.tr">http://aa.com.tr</a></p> <p>An electronic newspaper <i>Haber Vaktim</i> ("My Time for News"). Available at: <a href="http://habervaktim.com">http://habervaktim.com</a></p> <p>An electronic newspaper <i>Ozgur Gundem</i> ("The Free Agenda"). Available at: <a href="http://ozgur-gundem.com">http://ozgur-gundem.com</a></p> <p><i>Cihan Haber Ajansi</i> ("The World" news agency) web site: <a href="http://cihan.com.tr">http://cihan.com.tr</a></p>	<p>The web site of broadcast news service <i>Rusya'nin Sesi Radyosu</i> ("The Voice of Russia"): <a href="http://turkish.ruvr.ru">http://turkish.ruvr.ru</a></p> <p>News web site <i>TurkHaber – Ukrayna Haberleri</i> ("News about Ukraine in Turkish"). Available at: <a href="http://turkhaber.com.ua">http://turkhaber.com.ua</a></p> <p>News portal <i>Ukrayna Gundem</i> ("Ukraine is on the Agenda"). Available at: <a href="http://ukraynagundem.com">http://ukraynagundem.com</a></p> <p>News web site <i>UkrTurk – Ukrayna'ya acilis sayfasi</i> ("UkrTurk – a Page Opened Towards Ukraine"). Available at: <a href="http://ukrturk.net">http://ukrturk.net</a></p> <p>News portal <i>Avrasya Haber</i> ("Eurasian News"). Available at: <a href="http://www.avrasya-haber.com">http://www.avrasya-haber.com</a></p> <p><i>Kirim Haber Ajansi</i> ("Crimean News Agency") web site: <a href="http://qha.com.ua">http://qha.com.ua</a></p> <p>Turkish versions of the web sites of <i>Euronews</i>, <i>BBC</i>, <i>Deutsche Welle</i>, etc.</p>

The paper focuses on how the Euromaidan events were represented in Turkish mass media. There are several reasons for why this issue might be of some interest. First, Turkey keeps strengthening its position on the international scene. Besides, both trade and economic relationship and cultural links between Turkey and Ukraine have developed rapidly in recent years. Second, peculiarities of Turkey's integration into the European Union are also worth mentioning: Turkey had signed the Association Agreement with the European Economic Community (ancestor of the EU) as early as 1963; moreover, it has been a NATO member since 1952. In 1996, Turkey concluded the FTA (Free Trade Agreement) with

the European Union. Nevertheless, it still remains a candidate country for EU accession. A number of European countries are against Turkey's EU membership since they think that Ankara does not follow the key European standards of democracy. Third, being a social institution the mass media play an especially important role in the society as they are able both to inspire absolute trust and provoke total distrust, both to consolidate and split the society. Another reason for why the author chose this topic is her experience of working as a translator and contributor to a news web site *TurkHaber – Ukrayna Haberleri* ("News about Ukraine in Turkish")<sup>1</sup>.

Trying to provide a complete picture of the Euromaidan events (and how they were interpreted in Turkish media), the author has analysed about 20 newspaper articles from various sources. To make the analysis more convenient and clear-cut, the author divided all Turkish mass media into two big groups: the first group consisted of paper and electronic media published in Turkey, the second one included the mass media published in Turkish beyond Turkey<sup>2</sup> and Turkish versions of international news agencies such as *Euronews*, *BBC*, *Al Jazeera*, etc. (see Table).

Before analysing the newspaper articles which describe the Euromaidan events, it would be advisable to give some information concerning the mass media mentioned here.

### ***Mass media published in Turkey***

*Turkiye* ("Turkey" in Turkish) is a daily newspaper established by Enver Oren (1939–2013), a well-known businessman and an honorary member of the International Islamic Academy of Sciences. The first title of the newspaper was *Hakikat* ("The Truth"). Its first issue dated 22 April, 1970. In 1972, it was renamed *Turkiye*. The newspaper is owned by the *Ihlas*<sup>3</sup> Holding Group of Companies, whose founder was Enver Oren too. The newspaper's readership consists mainly of the so-called right-wing voters (adherents of the centre-right Party of Justice and Development<sup>4</sup> established in 2001 by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the current President of Turkey, and supporters of the far-right Party of Nationalist Movement<sup>5</sup> led by Devlet Bahçeli). That is the first newspaper in Turkey, which began being distributed on a subscription basis. It is interesting that on 10 December, 1989, the newspaper set a record when 1,424,350 copies were sold in one day. None of Turkish periodicals has broken its record yet.

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1 The titles and headlines of the newspapers and quotes from the articles mentioned here may not be translated literally. Some Turkish characters may not be displayed either.

2 This group of mass media mainly covers the events in social, economic and political life of a country where they are published.

3 *Ihlas* literally means "purity" or "sincerity". Besides, it is the name of the 112th surah of the Holy Qur'an.

4 The Justice and Development Party (Turkish: *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or AKP) has been described as a "broad right-wing coalition of Islamists, reformist Islamists, conservatives, nationalists, centre-right, and pro-business groups". Now the AKP is the ruling party in Turkey.

5 Turkish: *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, or MHP.

*Anadolu Ajansi*, or AA (“Anatolia Agency” in Turkish) is the oldest news agency in Turkey. It was established on 6 April, 1920, by the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk together with a renowned journalist Yunus Nadi Abalıoglu and woman writer Halide Edip Adivar. Today *Anadolu Ajansi* is a state-run media outlet. The AA’s motto is: “Trustworthy, unbiased and fast news reporting” (“*Dogru, tarafsiz ve hizli habercilik*”). Since December 2014 the position of Director General and Chairman of the Board of Directors of *Anadolu Ajansi* has been occupied by Senol Kazanci, former Counsellor to the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The agency’s network covers over 30 countries world-wide.

The centre-left newspaper *Hurriyet* (“freedom” in Turkish) was founded on May 1, 1948, by Sedat Simavi (1896–1953), a well-known Turkish journalist and writer. The newspaper is a part of the *Dogan Media Group*, owned by Aydin Dogan, a well-known businessman and media proprietor. Being liberal and pro-secular in political outlook, the newspaper was targeted by Turkish authorities: in September 2015, *Hurriyet*’s offices were attacked by pro-government mobs who groundlessly accused it of sympathising with the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) insurgent groups.

The founder of a daily newspaper *Milliyet* (“nation” in Turkish) was a well-known Turkish journalist Ali Naci Karacan (1896–1955). Its first issue dated 3 May, 1950. After Karacan’s death the newspaper was published by his son. On February 1, 1979, Abdi Ipekci, the editor-in-chief of *Milliyet*, was murdered by terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca, who attempted to assassinate the Pope John Paul II two years later. In 2012–2013, a significant number of the newspaper’s journalists were dismissed because of being critical of the ruling Justice and Development Party and government.

The centre-right newspaper *Sabah* (“morning” in Turkish) is a part of the holding *Turkuvaz* (“turquoise” in Turkish) Media Group. It was founded on April 22, 1985. Since the 1990s it has been published in Germany and other European countries (for the Turkish Diaspora).

The centre-left newspaper *Vatan* (“Motherland” in Turkish) was established on September 2, 2002. Together with the above-mentioned *Milliyet* it has been a part of the holding *Demiroren Group* since 2012. The newspaper portrays itself as a follower of Atatürk’s ideology. The *Vatan*’s motto is: “The Country’s Best Newspaper” (“*Ulkenin en iyi gazetesi*”).

*Zaman* (“time” or “era” in Turkish) is a daily newspaper founded on 3 November, 1986. Its first editor-in-chief was Fehmi Kuru, a Turkish journalist and writer. *Zaman* was a major, high-circulation daily before being seized by the government authorities on 4 March, 2016 (the circulation was around 650,000 as of February 2016). It was the first Turkish daily to set up an online version in 1995. The newspaper was punished more than once for criticism against the ruling party and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In December 2014, Ekrem Dumanli (who was the newspaper’s editor-in-chief at that time) together with several other *Zaman*’s journalists was arrested on charges of plotting a coup and belonging to a terrorist organisation. Their arrests evoked indignation in the world. Turkey’s attempts to silence critical media were called “repeated infringement on civil liberties”. The world’s leading lawyers and officials urged Turkey to respect freedom of speech. Ekrem Dumanli remained in custody for six days and

was continuously interrogated. Then he was released for lack of evidence. But he was barred from travelling abroad. Another fact worth mentioning is that Dumanli was arrested a short time after publishing his interview with Fethullah Gulen<sup>1</sup>, a renowned Islamic cleric, who often criticised Erdogan's policies. Turkish President claims that Fethullah Gulen (who is currently living in self-imposed exile in the USA) has created and financed a "parallel state" inside Turkey, whose purpose is to undermine and possibly overthrow the elected Turkish government. Erdogan imputed protests in Istanbul's Taksim Square in June 2013 and publication of materials "discrediting" the government (in fact, the "discredit" meant publications about corruption among persons close to President) to activities of Gulen's supporters among high-ranking Turkish officials.

Just a day after being seized and put under the administration of a court-appointed panel of trustees, *Zaman* switched to a pro-government line. Undoubtedly, the court-ordered takeover of the newspaper was one of the darkest pages in history of Turkish press.

*Cumhuriyet* ("republic" in Turkish) is the oldest up-market Turkish daily newspaper. Its first issue dated May 7, 1924. The name "Cumhuriyet" was given to the newspaper by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who was also a founder of the Republican People's Party<sup>2</sup>. During 1978–2000 seven *Cumhuriyet's* journalists were killed by unknown persons and one was heavily wounded (actually, the 1970s and '80s were a period of political murders in Turkey, and on September 12, 1980, there occurred a military coup d'etat). In January 2015, having published cartoons from French satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* (after the magazine had been attacked by terrorists), the newspaper evoked resentment among many Turkish Muslims<sup>3</sup>.

The newspaper *Ozgur Gundem* ("free agenda" in Turkish) was published daily all over Turkey from May 30, 1992, to April 14, 1994. There were *Ozgur Gundem's* Turkish and Kurdish versions. The newspaper mainly covered the Turkish-Kurdish conflict<sup>4</sup>. Being accused of supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party<sup>5</sup>, it was closed down by court decision. Most contributors of the newspaper were arrested, convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Besides, almost 30 *Ozgur Gundem's* correspondents and newsagents had been killed by unknown persons for less than two years of its existence. The paper began to appear again in April 2011. The newspaper's motto is: "The truth will not remain in the dark" ("*Gercekler karanlikta kalmayacak*").

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1 Fethullah Gulen had been a strong ally of the Turkish President in the past, but this alliance came to a swift end when prosecutors seen as sympathetic to Gulen the opened corruption investigation into Erdogan's inner circle in late 2013.

2 The Republican People's Party (Turkish: *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, or *CHP*) is at present the main opposition party in Turkey.

3 Can Dunder, the editor-in-chief of *Cumhuriyet*, was arrested in November 2015 on charges of espionage after alleging that Turkey's Intelligence Agency helped deliver weapons to Islamist rebels in Syria.

4 An armed conflict between the Republic of Turkey and various Kurdish insurgent groups, which have demanded separation from Turkey to create an independent Kurdistan, or to have autonomy and greater political and cultural rights for Kurds inside the Republic of Turkey.

5 A militant left-wing organisation based in Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan.

On 14 March 2016, Ankara Public Prosecutor's Office started a new investigation against the newspaper for allegedly "making propaganda for a terrorist organisation".

### *Mass media published beyond Turkey*

The web site <http://tr.sputniknews.com/turkish.ruvr.ru> is a Turkish version of news service *Sputnik*<sup>1</sup>, launched in November 2014 by Russia Today (RT). Previously, until November 2014, it was the web site of the radio station "Voice of Russia" (*Rusya'nin Sesi Radyosu RS FM*). Now RT is a Russian government-funded television network that runs cable and satellite TV channels directed to audiences outside Russia as well as provides content in multiple languages, including Russian. The editor-in-chief is a Russian journalist Margarita Simonyan.

The news portal *Avrasya Haber* ("Eurasian News") covers political, economic and cultural events not only in Ukraine, but also in Russia, Belarus, and other countries in the post-Soviet space. Deniz Berktaş, a Turkish journalist and contributor to the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* and to the web site of the television news channel *Al Jazeera Turk*, is the founder of *Avrasya Haber*.

*Kirim Haber Ajansi* ("The Crimean News Agency"), as follows from its name, is a detailed overview of events in Ukraine and Crimea.

The above-mentioned news web site *TurkHaber – Ukrayna Haberleri* together with *Ukrayna Haber*, *Ukrayna Gundem*, *UkrTurk*, etc., pays attention mainly to key events in Ukraine and abroad. Both professional journalists and amateurs (who, in their turn, are members of the International Turkish-Ukrainian Businessmen Association) are involved in preparing content for these web sites. *Ukrayna Haber* was created by Yunus Erdogdu, a news reporter of the *Cihan* agency<sup>2</sup>. The author of the *UkrTurk* site is Serkan Bag, a Turkish journalist and economist.

The **analysis** of the Euromaidan events, which later were called the Revolution of Dignity, embraces the following aspects: a) what caused mass protests in Kyiv's Independence Square (both immediate and remote causes were analysed); b) who were mainly Euromaidan participants, how they looked and behaved, how they described their political views and explained their own motives for participation in anti-government protests; c) what was the character of protests and how it changed over time; d) what forces contributed to the continuation of protests; e) the outcomes of the Revolution of Dignity; f) predictions about what "a post-Maidan Ukraine" will look like in the near future. Besides, some authors make a comparison between Euromaidan and similar acts of civil disobedience in Ukraine (first of all, the Orange Revolution) and other countries.

As a matter of fact, the main reason for starting protests in Maidan was Viktor Yanukovich's (who was the President of Ukraine at that time) refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU at the Eastern Partnership Summit, which would be held several days later, on 28–29 November 2013, in Vilnius. The *Turkiye* newspaper interprets these events in the following way: "Kyiv has sus-

<sup>1</sup> On 14 April 2016, access to Sputnik's website was blocked from Turkey by Turkey's Telecommunications Authority.

<sup>2</sup> Istanbul-based *Cihan* news agency was also seized and put under state control on 4 March 2016.

pending preparations for European partnership, since there is no sign that the European Union will make up losses that could be inflicted on Ukraine (in case of accession to the EU)” (*“Avrupa Birliđi’nden Ukrayna’nin zararlarinin telafi edilecegine iliskin bir isaret alinamamasindan dolayi Kiev Avrupa ortakligi surecini durdurdu”*). Certainly, there is no point in citing the entire article (the same is true for other articles mentioned here); otherwise, the paper will be too long. It would be more advisable to focus on the most significant points. First, Ukraine’s trade relations with Russia and other CIS countries have weakened considerably over the last four months (from August to November 2013); as a result, Ukraine’s economy has incurred substantial losses, which are being deliberately neglected in order to distract public attention from the problem. Second, Ukraine is likely to incur even more losses if the government continues rapprochement with the EU: industrial enterprises will certainly be closed down, and unemployment will increase. Needless to say, these losses can be neither avoided nor made up<sup>1</sup>.

The resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers on suspending the process of preparation for concluding the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement evoked strong discontent among most Ukrainians, while Russian political elites expressed their approval. Numerous media outlets reported that Moscow was satisfied “with Ukraine’s decision to develop cooperation with Russia and other CIS countries”<sup>2</sup>. It was also emphasised that the European Union was disappointed with Ukraine’s decision to freeze all efforts towards signing the Association Agreement, and if the decision was implemented all the Ukrainian people would be disappointed. However, “the ball is still on the Ukrainian side” (*“top Ukrayna’nin sahasinda”*), so Ukraine has the right to choose which way to go.

Another article (from the same web site) begins with the words: “European countries exert pressure on Ukraine and try to blackmail it”. This is an excerpt from the answer given by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to a reporter of the *Interfax* news agency at the press conference following the Fourth Meeting of the High-Level Russian-Turkish Cooperation Council<sup>3</sup>: “We have really heard intimidation from our European partners towards Ukraine — even to the extent that they will instigate mass protests. This is pressure and blackmail” (*“Aslinda, Acrupali ortaklarimiz tarafindan Ukrayna’ya yonelik, kitlesele protesto eylemlerini tesvik etmeye kadar varan tehditleri duyduk. Bu bir baski, bu bir santajdir”*). Vladimir Putin also stressed that Russia is ready to participate together with Ukraine and EU in trilateral talks on trade and economic cooperation and called these talks a test for European partners.

Deniz Berktaş, the author of the article “Is it the New Orange Revolution?” (*“Yeni bir Turuncu Devrim mi?”*)<sup>4</sup>, analysing the causes of the new Maidan, brings to the forefront an economic aspect of the problem: after the 2008 world economic crisis Ukraine experienced considerable deterioration in quality of life, so political life did not interest Ukrainians as much as before. However, they kept

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1 The newspaper published an excerpt from the speech of the former Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine Yuri Boiko in order to confirm that idea.

2 A quote from the news published on the web site of the Voice of Russia.

3 The meeting was held in St. Petersburg on November 22, 2013.

4 The article published in the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper on 8 December, 2013.

cherishing hopes for “a better European future”, believing that joining the EU would put an end to long-lasting economic hardships. Therefore, Ukraine's sharp turn on the eve of the Eastern Partnership Summit meant for most of them collapse of all hopes and expectations.

In the 2004 presidential campaign, Viktor Yanukovich was an antagonist to pro-Western (“orange”) forces and so prevented, without success, their coming to power. However, he managed to win the presidency in 2010. Analysing the factors that could help him gain victory, the author draws the reader's attention to political quarrels, which often occurred within the ruling coalition after the Orange Revolution and eventually led to political instability. Besides, as a result of the 2008 global economic crisis, many Ukrainians suffered a considerable decline in living standards. Those were the reasons why they lost interest in politics at all. Even voters from Western Ukraine, who never liked Yanukovich anyway, seemed to reconcile themselves to the existing state of affairs. “Come what may,” they said. So, neither the arrest and imprisonment of the former prime minister Yuliia Tymoshenko nor other dramatic events were able to make such a large number of people come out to the streets. But once Ukraine's economy slumped, support for the ruling party decreased a lot. Notwithstanding all these difficulties, both the party of power and the opposition kept talking about a promising future for Ukraine as a potential EU candidate, describing the “European choice” as a panacea for Ukraine's ills (*her derde deva*). But once Ukraine stepped back from the declared political line, thousands of people took to the streets. Thus, the reins of Ukraine's domestic policy fell into Brussels' hands.

In the author's view, the further course of events depends mainly on external forces: “Those who organised the Orange Revolution could achieve their aims, because western countries overtly supported the Ukrainian opposition. The same is true for today's protests. Whether they will continue or subside depends more on the outcome of negotiations between Kyiv and Brussels sector (or rather, between Kyiv, Brussels and Moscow) than on Kyiv itself”.

“Why both the West and Russia are so interested in Ukraine?” asks Murat Cakir, a columnist of the “*Ozgur Gundem*” newspaper (the article under this title appeared on February 1, 2014). First of all, Ukrainian seaports Odesa and Sevastopol are of great importance to Russia; the latter, moreover, is a strategically important base for Russia's naval fleet. However, Ukraine is attractive to the European Union too, because of being a transit country: 80% of petroleum and natural gas, transported from Russia and Central Asia to Europe, passes through Ukraine's pipeline network. Besides, Ukraine is rich in natural resources. There are about 109 billion tons of coal and natural gas in Donbas. Eastern Ukraine, whose population consists mainly of ethnic Russians, is a huge granary. In fact, Ukraine is the world's third biggest cereal exporter (after the USA and all EU countries put together). Some big agricultural corporations and food companies such as *Monsanto*, *Cargill* and *Kraft Foods* took a keen interest in Ukraine long ago. Besides, iron ore, granite, graphite and salt deposits have always been arousing the appetites of European steel manufacturers, porcelain companies and chemical firms. So, this information is sufficient for understanding why Ukraine evokes such a strong interest.

The author also emphasises that ordinary Ukrainians are experiencing impoverishment and social injustice, which have reached their peak (“*Halkin yok-*



*sullasmasi ve adaletsizlik had safhada*”). Of course, it was quite natural that people turned out on the streets to demand democracy, social justice and civil liberties. However, one can hardly say that the majority of those who came to Maidan represented a real “people’s” opposition (*“gercek bir halk muhalefeti”*). The author argues that there were representatives of ultra-nationalist and fascist parties, who only made a lot of noise and thus diverted attention from the people’s just demands (*“Asiri milliyetci ve fasist partilerin cikarttiklari gurultu, halkin hakli taleplerinin ustunu ortuyor”*). The current situation plays into the West’s hands since the latter is striving for “regime change” in Ukraine (*“Ve bu durum, “rejim degisikligi” pesinde olan Bati’nin isine geliyor”*). Eventually, Ukrainians become victims of the war of interests being waged between the major imperialist forces (*“Sonucta Ukraynalilar emperyalist guclerin cekar savaslarina kurban ediliyor”*).

Murat Cakir’s another article “Ukraine as the Epicentre of Inter-imperialist Contradictions” (*“Emperyalist celiskiler odagi Ukrayna”*) focuses attention on a serious conflict between the USA and the European Union (especially Germany). Proving this, the author cites a fragment of the leaked phone conversation between Victoria Nuland, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, and Geoffrey Pyatt, the United States Ambassador to Ukraine, in which Ms Nuland expressed the hope that the UN will help the United States to “teach EU a lesson”.

A reporter of the independent online newspaper *T24* (who writes under the pen name *Ex Libris*) calls the Euromaidan events “manifestation of nationalists” (*“milliyetci’ bir tezahur*), happened as a result of Ukrainians’ longing to get rid of the Russian rule. The article begins with the words: “Anyone who does not jump loves Russians” (*“Ziplamayan herkes Ruslari seviyor”*). The word “nationalist” is put in inverted commas. “Ukrainians, who are considered the poorest nation in Europe after Kosovans and Moldovans, ended up deciding whether to become Europeans or to be like sheep led by Moscow” (*“Halen Acrupa’nin, Kosovalilar ve Moldavlardan sonra en fakir halki sayilan Ukraynalilar, Moskova tarafindan koyun misali gudulmek ile Acrupalilasmak arasinda bir tercihle karsi karsiyalar”*), notes the reporter. She catches sight of placards depicting a portrait of Yanukovich together with Stalin and Hitler, thus symbolising “the old system” (*“eski duzen”*) — in other words, Russia’s age-old hegemony over Ukraine, which Ukrainians want to get rid of. Meanwhile, the author seems to be surprised by the fact that adherents of European integration (she thinks that Tymoshenko’s sympathisers are among them too) stand on the same side of the barricades as the far-right “Svoboda” (“Freedom”), which has got many fascist-like features (*“fasizan cizgiler”*). “There are quite a few rough-looking, brawny guys in Maidan, who are strolling through the protest camp, holding chain whips and cobblestones in their hands”, says the author.

The article “Gezi’s Followers in Maidan” (*“Gezi’ye ozenen cocuklar Maydan’da”*), published on December 15, 2013, on the *Hurriyet’s* web site, also pays special attention to the protesters’ characteristics, comparing them to Gezi’s participants. The author notes that most protesters in Istanbul’s Gezi Park could speak English (or even multiple languages) fluently while only few of Maidan’s participants (despite the fact that the majority of them were young people) spoke good English. In general, their knowledge of English was quite poor. The protesters could hardly tell what they were expecting from EU integration. “We want to live

a better life, we want the same freedom as Europeans have” was all they were able to say (“*Gençler sadece “Daha iyi yaşamak istiyoruz, Avrupa’daki gibi özgürlük istiyoruz.” diyorlar*”). However, the author takes a great deal of pride in Ukraine, who, like Turkey, “has demolished the wall of fear” (“*korku duvarını yikti*”).

Mustafa Yalciner, the author of the article “*Istanbul – Gezi, Kiev – Maidan...*”, also makes a comparison between the events which took place in Kyiv’s Maidan and in Taksim Gezi Park. The government’s controversial renovation plan for the city centre, widely known as the “Taksim pedestrianisation project” (along with building a new shopping mall), seemed to be the main cause of the protests in Gezi Park. People gathered there to stop developers from cutting down trees in the park, as it was the only green area in that district. However, there were deeper causes underlying the Gezi Park protests. First of all, Istanbulites were complaining about increasingly autocratic style of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who held the office of the Prime Minister of Turkey then. Besides, not a few people were concerned about Islamisation of Turkey, which has been a secular state since 1928, due to Atatürk’s political reforms. So, the government’s encroachment on Turkey’s secularism was perceived rather negatively, especially by those who shared secular views.

The protest wave in Taksim Square began on 28 May, 2013, and continued until the end of August, spreading to other Istanbul’s districts and then to almost all major Turkey’s cities. Trying to demolish the protester camp, the police used tear gas and water cannons against the activists.

“Well, we know Gezi, as we were not far from it. We have gone through it”, emphasises the author. “The government must resign! Tayyip must resign!” demanded the protesters. Then he adds, “Well, what really made us come there to protest? Love for the environment. Trees. Yes, that was true!.. But the real reason was the President’s position ‘I decide everything myself’; the fact that he ignored the thoughts and feelings of the city inhabitants, whom he called “the rabble” (*ayak takimi*)... So, there was an outburst of democratic anger” (“*Demokratik ofke buradan patladı*”).

Thus, Turks bitterly resented the fact that the prime minister made decisions without any regard for ordinary people’s opinions while Ukrainians wanted to get rid of Russia’s control and turn towards the West; in other words, Ukraine’s geopolitical realignment was brought to the forefront. In the author’s opinion, “ordinary people” were the main driving force behind the Gezi Park protests while Euromaidan came into being due to pro-EU Ukrainians and supporters of the former prime minister Yuliia Tymoshenko.

The *Hurriyet* newspaper also focuses on some Maidan’s key figures like ethno-pop singer Ruslana, who threatened to burn herself alive unless the government meets protesters’ demands. The article appeared on 7 December, 2013 — just a week after a special police unit “Berkut” had violently dispersed protesters and torn down their camp.

Berkut’s assault on the protester camp initiated the next phase of Euromaidan, which was described in detail by Yunus Erdogdu, a news reporter of the *Cihan* agency, in the article “Police Interference in Ukrainian Euromaidan” (“*Ukrayna’da Euro Meydan’a polis mudahalesi*”). Another article by the same author “Euromaidan Must Go On Until the Year 2015” (“*Meydan 2015 yılına kadar devam etmeli*”) is also worth mentioning. The author cites an excerpt from Arsenii

Yatseniuk's<sup>1</sup> speech in Maidan. From the politician's viewpoint, the protest actions in Euromaidan must continue until 2015, that is to say until the year of the next presidential election in Ukraine: "We have a whole year to prepare for the election. Hundreds of people from Maidan will work as election observers; millions of voters will go to the poll and defend Ukrainians' choice on election night... The actions taking place in the city centre are to be continued, as they are a symbol of freedom in Ukraine. We will win only when these actions engulf Ukraine from the West to the East" (*"Bir senemiz var secimlere hazirlanmak icin. Meydandaki yuzlerce insan secimde komisyonlarda, gozlemciler olarak calismali ve oy sayiminin yapilacagi gece milyonlarca secmen secim bolgelerine gidip Ukraynalilarin secimini korumali... Kiev'in merkezindeki eylemler Ukrayna'da ozgurlugun bir sembolu olarak kalmaya devam etmeli. Yalniz bu eylemler ne zaman tum Ukrayna'yi, Bati'dan ve Dogu'ya kadar kusatirsa biz o zaman kazanacagiz"*).

Unfortunately, Ukrainians have won at the cost of many lives. "The first Maidan ended without casualties, whereas about 100 people were killed in the second one", notes Deniz Berktaş in the article entitled "Discussions about a New Revolution in Ukraine" (*"Ukrayna'da 'yeni devrim' tartismalari"*).

However, the "life after Maidan" turned out to be even crueller than the Maidan reality. The armed conflict in Donbas, which broke out in the spring of 2014, has not been solved yet. The death toll surpasses 10,000, and the number of displaced people is increasing too. Moreover, the number of crippled fates is incalculable. Ideological divergences still continue to split the society in two. And it stands to reason that such a strong polarisation affects many Ukrainian families. Yet there remains a hope that Ukrainians, as a well-known sociologist Yevhen Golovakha once aptly noted, will be sensible enough "to stop moving towards before the abyss".

Needless to say, media play an extremely important role in society if they are a source of impartial and reliable information, free from emotional biases; otherwise, they will create a distorted view of reality. Being able to critically analyse all the information received from newspapers, TV or from the Internet, to compare and contrast different points of view, is also of great importance. We should not forget the words of Malcolm X, an American human rights activist: "If you are not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing".

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