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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Published by the Ukrainian National Association Inc., a fraternal non-profit association

Vol. XCII

No. 38

THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

\$2.00

Leaked records detail vast Russian influence campaign targeting Ukraine, EU



Video screen grab via RFE/RL

The influence operation produced falsified Ukrainian government documents, including a forged order purportedly issued by Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy (center).

Schemes

A trove of leaked records from a Russian disinformation campaign reveals how Moscow sought to discredit Ukraine and Western governments that support it while also trying to boost support for far-right political parties in the European Union.

The documents obtained by a consortium of European media outlets and shared with Schemes, the investigative unit of RFE/RL’s Ukrainian Service, highlight the internal operations of the Social Design Agency, a Moscow-based company that the United States says has led the propaganda campaign at the Kremlin’s behest.

The campaign included a diverse mix of memes, falsified videos and government documents, and a network of websites impersonating legitimate news outlets across Europe to disseminate fake stories aimed at undermining Western support for Ukraine after Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The records state that one meme denigrating Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that was shared on X by its billionaire owner, Elon Musk, and garnered 86,000 reshares was a creation of the Social Design Agency.

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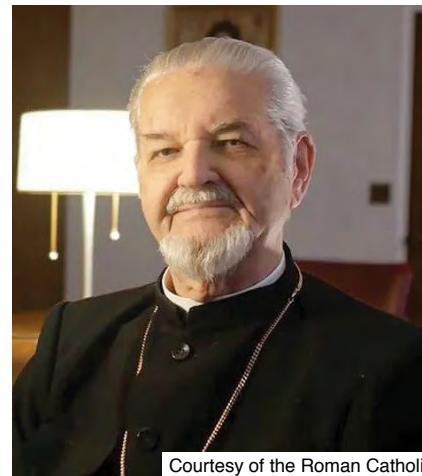
Bishop Basil Losten, Ukrainian Catholic church leader in U.S., dies

Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport

STAMFORD, Conn. – Bishop Basil Losten, a leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States who played a crucial role in revitalizing the church in Ukraine after the collapse of Soviet rule, died on September 15 at Stamford Hospital in Connecticut. He was 94.

His death was announced by the Eparchy of Stamford, which he led for nearly three decades. Bishop Losten, who served as a priest for 67 years and as a bishop for 53, was instrumental in supporting the resurgence of the Ukrainian Catholic Church following decades of Communist repression.

Basil Harry Losten was born on May 11, 1930, in Chesapeake City, Md., the



Courtesy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bridgeport

Bishop Basil Losten was a leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in the United States who played a crucial role in revitalizing the church in Ukraine after the collapse of Soviet rule.

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Zelenskyy says ‘victory plan’ ready as drone attack rocks arms depot in Russia

Satellite images show aftermath of devastating attack



Video screen grab via RFE/RL

A fireball rises following a Ukrainian drone attack in Russia’s Tver region on September 18.

RFE/RL’s Russian Service and North Realities

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on September 18 that Kyiv has “fully prepared” its “victory plan” to end the war with Russia and the most important thing now is the determination to implement it.

All points of the plan have been “worked out,” Mr. Zelenskyy said in his evening address.

“There is and cannot be any alternative to peace, any freezing of the war or any other manipulations that will simply move Russian aggression to another stage. We need reliable and long-term security for Ukraine, and therefore for all of Europe,” the president said.

The Ukrainian leader said last week that he intends to discuss the plan with U.S. President Joe Biden this month. He also

(Continued on page 3)

Kyiv honors Heorhiy Gongadze with memorial alley, marking 24 years since his disappearance and murder

by Roman Tymotsko

KYIV – A temporary alley in memory of Ukrainian-Georgian journalist and activist Heorhiy Gongadze, who was kidnapped and killed in September 2000, opened in Kyiv, marking the beginning of a week of events meant to honor and commemorate the journalist.

The alley, which consists of informational banners about the journalist’s life and work, is intended to highlight Mr. Gongadze’s contribution to the establishment of civil society and democracy in Ukraine, as well as the spread of the Ukrainian voice in the world.

The team of the Heorhiy Gongadze Prize in partnership with the National Museum of the Revolution of Dignity initiated the memorial alley in front of the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in Kyiv.

“In the face of Russia’s aggressive attempts to once again bind us Ukrainians to itself, it is important to return not just to the origins of history but to specific individuals. People who were the drivers of change, who became the impetus for historical change. Heorhiy was exactly like that. This alley is another reminder that the heroes of Ukraine cannot and will not be forgotten, and evil must always be punished. Threats, repression and murder have no place in Ukraine,” said Vladyslav Zinkevych, program director of the Heorhiy Gongadze Prize.

The information banners in the alley tell the story of Mr. Gongadze’s life and contribution to independent journalism and civil society in Ukraine.

The organizers say that the alley

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Moscow takes the measure of Western vacillations

by Pavel K. Baev
Eurasia Daily Monitor

Since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine, the U.S.-led Western coalition has demonstrated remarkable determination in supporting Kyiv. Yet, every practical step in providing military support to defiant Ukraine has involved protracted deliberations (Kuzio, "Crimea: Where Russia's War Started and Where Ukraine Will Win," July 8). Moscow has sought to exploit and exacerbate these concerns but has been unable to derail coalitions formed for supplying Ukraine with Leopard main battle tanks or F-16 fighter jets. Current deliberations in London, Brussels and Washington revolve around granting Ukraine consent to launch long-distance strikes into Russia with Western weapons systems, which would presumably put even more pressure on the Kremlin and its disastrous war. Russian President Vladimir Putin is attempting to distort these discussions, launching a fresh wave of escalatory threats should Western capitals grant Kyiv such authorization (Rossiiskaya Gazeta, September 13).

Putin's brinkmanship has grown tired in its rhetoric and lack of follow-through. In an effort to be more convincing, he upped the ante, claiming that a dramatic change in the "very nature, very essence of the conflict" was supposed to re-energize Russian deterrence (Rossiiskaya Gazeta, September 13). Russian mainstream media reported on the supposed international resonance from Putin's assertion that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries were set to enter directly into war with Russia and his promise to make "appropri-

ate decisions" (Kommersant, September 13). Less attention has been given to the fact that this outburst happened immediately after he met with Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Yi (RBC, September 12). Upon closer examination, despite all the pomp, there is not much new substance in Putin's posturing. Nevertheless, his latest words still contain nuances worthy of a closer look (Republic.ru, September 13).

For once, Putin did not single out the United States, instead grouping the country with European states. Even so, the Kremlin knows perfectly well that the power of the decision in question rests primarily with Washington. Putin's statement makes it impossible for U.S. President Joe Biden to yield to nuclear blackmail, and brushing it away by saying "I do not think much about Putin" is a proper but insufficient response (Izvestiya, September 14). Few doubts remain about the forthcoming permission for Ukraine to execute long-range strikes. The real question is about timing and targeting, as only the United States can supply real-time high-precision data, even if Putin speaks about "NATO satellites" (Meduza, September 14). The Kremlin may well presume the decision has already been made. Thus, the purpose of the new emphasis on nuclear risks aims to boost this theme in U.S. domestic debates as the elections in November loom (Nezavisimaya Gazeta, September 12). The surge of public concerns about a nuclear catastrophe would play well with former U.S. President Donald Trump's dubious promise to convince Russia and Ukraine to end the war prompt-

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Russian Orthodox Church recruits African students for Moscow's war in Ukraine

by Sergey Sukhankin
Eurasia Daily Monitor

In early March, Bishop Konstantin of Zaraisk, head of the exarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church in Africa, traveled to Tanzania and administered the holy sacrament of baptism for the first time on African soil (Patriarchia.ru, March 12). Later, between August 10 and 29, he traveled to Kenya, where he held a series of meetings with members of the Russian Embassy and local followers of the Russian Orthodox creed. He also paid visits to the Russian-sponsored infrastructure in the area, such as schools and cathedrals (Patriarchia.ru, September 2). These activities point to Moscow's renewed focus on expanding its influence and soft power in Africa.

Given its lack of economic resources as compared to other major players, such as China or the European Union, the Kremlin will likely continue to act through the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) to exert its influence through disinformation and spreading anti-Western sentiments that traditionally appeal to conservatism and anti-colonialism. A more menacing threat associated with the ROC and its activities in Africa pertains to Moscow's recruitment of locals for its paramilitary needs through religious beliefs. Between 2021 and 2024, since the ROC established its own exarchate in Africa, the ROC launched an aggressive offensive in Africa that aims to

expand the Kremlin's presence and foster pro-Russian sentiment among locals, hoping to take advantage of anti-Western sentiments in some countries of the Global South (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 22, December 4, 2019, April 23, August 5, 2020, February 22; ROC Patriarchal Exarchate of Africa, accessed September 16).

On December 29, 2021, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church formed the Patriarchal Exarchate of Africa. Russian Patriarch Kirill actively lobbied for this action and justified it through the ongoing split between the ROC, the "Ukrainian schismatics," and opponents in the Greek Orthodox Church of Alexandria (Novaya-gazeta.ru, January 14, 2022). Russia's first Patriarchal Exarch Metropolitan Leonid (Gorbachev) (2021-2023), an experienced veteran of clerical-diplomatic affairs, launched an aggressive information campaign to increase the participation of local African nationals in ROC activities. For this, he enticed local African nationals with generous financial stimuli and offers to pursue studies and careers under the umbrella of the ROC. Leonid was said to have been an avid supporter of Yevgeny Prigozhin and the Wagner Group. Following Mr. Prigozhin's unsuccessful mutiny and his conflict with the ROC, the exarch was replaced by the more loyal Bishop Konstantin of Zaraisk

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NEWSBRIEFS

Zelenskyy says speedy aid 'critically important'

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy again urged the United States and other allies to "promptly implement" agreements on weapons and other supplies to help Ukraine fight Russia's invasion, underscoring Western debates on the extent and current restrictions on military aid to Kyiv. In a new video message late on September 14, he said "it is critically important that all states, and especially the United States, really promptly implement the agreements reached with Ukraine." "It should be felt at the front," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "Every delay with military packages has its own negative consequence at the front. Every really timely, fast delivery has a positive impact." As unprecedented international military supply efforts continue to Ukraine, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has faced escalating calls among some members to rescind limits on Western-supplied weapons and supply more advanced weaponry. Kyiv has repeatedly said it needs to be able to conduct longer-range strikes into Russian territory to defend itself against invading Russian forces, an argument that has found some support among NATO officials. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer met U.S. President Joe Biden at the White House on September 13 to discuss whether to approve Kyiv's request to use long-range missiles against targets in Russia but did not announce any shift. Britain is reportedly nearing a decision on possibly letting Ukraine use its Storm Shadow missiles to strike Russian territory. U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on September 14 that Mr. Biden is "determined to use the four months [he has left in office] to put Ukraine in the best possible position to prevail." Threats voiced by Russian President Vladimir Putin and, more recently by former President Dmitry Medvedev – who on September 14 suggested a nuclear strike on the Ukrainian capital could turn that city of some 2 million residents into a "gray spot" on the map – have seemingly sought to ratchet up Moscow's discouragement of Western support for Kyiv. Mr. Zelenskyy said later on September 14 that he had spoken with a delegation of U.S. Congress members and "informed [them] about the current situation and prospects."

British Foreign Affairs Secretary David Lammy said on September 15 that Putin had repeatedly threatened the West that supplies of tanks and missiles "would mean that NATO countries, the United States and European countries are at war with Russia." "We sent them," Mr. Lammy said repeatedly, adding that "Putin threatens every few months to use nuclear weapons." Mr. Lammy said there was "a lot of bluster" but "we cannot be blown off course by an imperialist fascist" who "wants to move into countries willy-nilly." He said talks between Messrs. Starmer, Biden and Zelenskyy would resume at the United Nations General Assembly later this month. Debate has sharpened since Ukrainian forces' surprise incursion into the Kursk region of Russia over paths to bolster Kyiv's position ahead of potential cease-fire talks. Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal last week pressed for a second major international peace summit that he said he hoped could attract at least 150 countries, following up on a similar event hosted by Switzerland in June. In a fresh wave of Russian attacks overnight on September 14-15, Ukrainian authorities said a married couple had been killed in the southern Odesa region and that other key cities had been hit. Ukraine's military said that the country's air defenses had shot down 10 of 14 attack drones that Russia launched. It also said two Iskander ballistic missiles and a guided air missile, the latter of which was shot down, had targeted Odesa. In a Telegram post, Mr. Zelenskyy said that at least 30 people were injured when a Russian-guided bomb slammed into a residential building in the northeastern city of Kharkiv on September 15. "The rescue operation in Kharkiv continues. A Russian air strike. An ordinary residential building ... was damaged. There is a fire and rubble between the ninth and 12th floors." "This terror can be stopped. But to stop terror, one must stop the fear of strong decisions that are objectively needed," he added in another reference to allied reluctance to allow the use of Western-provided weapons to strike launching sites deep inside Russia. In Pokrovsk, an important logistics and supply hub for Ukrainian troops on the

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

FOUNDED 1933

An English-language newspaper published by the Ukrainian National Association Inc., a non-profit association, at 2200 Route 10, P.O. Box 280, Parsippany, NJ 07054.
Yearly subscription rate: \$90; for UNA members — \$80.

Periodicals postage paid at Caldwell, NJ 07006 and additional mailing offices.
(ISSN — 0273-9348)

The Weekly:
Tel: (973) 292-9800; Fax: (973) 644-9510

Postmaster, send address changes to:
The Ukrainian Weekly
2200 Route 10
P.O. Box 280
Parsippany, NJ 07054

The Ukrainian Weekly Archive: www.ukrweekly.com

The Ukrainian Weekly, September 22, 2024, No. 38, Vol. XCII
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ADMINISTRATION OF THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY AND SVOBODA

Walter Honcharyk, administrator
and advertising manager

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Outgoing NATO chief says members must be 'willing to pay the price' of peace

RFE/RL

In his farewell after leading the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for a decade, Jens Stoltenberg warned against "isolationism" among members of the military alliance, saying that its 32 members must be "willing to pay the price for peace" in the face of an emboldened Russia.

Speaking from NATO headquarters in Brussels on September 19, Mr. Stoltenberg highlighted achievements since he assumed office in 2014, as well as ongoing challenges at a time when the organization's relevance is "more important than ever."

"The good news is that we have delivered on the pledge we made 10 years ago [for individual members to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense], but the bad news is that this is no longer enough to keep us safe," Mr. Stoltenberg said, suggesting that the spending target will not be enough to protect the alliance in the face of an increasingly assertive and aggressive Russia.

"We have to be willing to pay the price for peace. The more money, the stronger our defenses, the more effective our deterrence, the greater our security," he said.

The 65-year-old Norwegian warned alliance members not to "trade short-term economic interests for long-term security needs," saying that "protectionism against allies does not protect our security."

Turning to Russia's war against Ukraine, which has become a contentious issue among some members who have ques-

tionsed NATO's strong support for Kyiv, Mr. Stoltenberg said that "Ukraine has to engage with Russia from a position of strength."

Any future peace deal between Ukraine and Russia, he said, "must be backed by strong and sustained military support, not just pieces of paper."

He also warned that "military power has its limits," saying that "the purpose of any future military operation outside NATO territory must be clearly defined."

"We need to be honest about what we can and cannot achieve," he said of the grouping of two North American and 30 European states.

Addressing "voices" on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean calling for a parting of ways, he said that "investing in the transatlantic relationship is the only winning way forward" and that "isolationism will not keep anyone safe."

Mr. Stoltenberg, a former prime minister of Norway who will return to his homeland to become central bank chief, will hand the reins over to former Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on October 1.

In his last months in office, Mr. Stoltenberg has tried to unify NATO members, with member Hungary presenting obstacles to the alliance's support for Ukraine and Prime Minister Viktor Orban saying it would not provide funds or military equipment to aid Kyiv.

Mr. Stoltenberg has also tried to calm nerves over suggestions that former U.S.



File photo

In his farewell after leading the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for a decade, Jens Stoltenberg warned against "isolationism" among members of the military alliance, saying its 32 members must be "willing to pay the price for peace" in the face of an emboldened Russia.

President Donald Trump would attempt – if reelected in November – to withdraw Washington from NATO.

At the NATO summit in Washington in July, he stressed that it was in the interests

of all members to remain united and downplayed Mr. Trump's desire to have the U.S. leave the bloc, saying that his main concern during his first term was to get members to reach their defense-spending targets.

Mr. Stoltenberg has also said that NATO could have done more to prevent the war in Ukraine had its members provided military equipment to Kyiv before Russia's all-out invasion in February 2022.

He lamented that NATO had not provided the weaponry that Kyiv requested because of fears that doing so would escalate tensions with Moscow.

During the July summit, he strongly backed Ukraine's irreversible path to NATO membership, saying that its "future is in NATO."

With Ukraine strongly lobbying its partners to permit its military to use donated weapons to strike deeper into Russia, Mr. Stoltenberg weighed in on the controversial subject by saying in an interview with The Times this week that granting permission would not be a red line for Moscow.

The Kremlin on September 18 called the comments by the outgoing NATO secretary-general "dangerous."

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Zelenskyy says...

(Continued from page 1)

said he would present it to U.S. presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. Mr. Zelenskyy is expected to be in the United States next week for the United Nations General Assembly meeting.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has dragged on for more than 30 months, and Mr. Zelenskyy's announcement came as Ukraine controls parts of Russia's Kursk region and as Moscow has pressed an advance into eastern Ukraine.

Mr. Zelenskyy has said he aims to host another international peace summit outlining his vision to end the war in November, and that Russia is to be invited.

His comments came after a suspected Ukrainian strike reportedly involving more than 100 drones rocked Russia's Tver region after an arms depot was hit and set off a string of violent explosions and caused a fire nearly 4 miles wide.

Emergency services launched a partial evacuation of local residents on September 18 hours after the overnight strike that appeared to target Toropets, a town about 250 miles west of Moscow that hosts two Russian military units and an arms depot.

The Astra Telegram channel and other social media published videos that showed massive explosions and flames erupting into the night sky near the town of Toropets, located in the west of the Tver region. Other footage posted on social media showed rows of apartment buildings in the town with windows blown out from blast waves.

Footage later posted on social media showed large plumes of smoke rising from the scene and rows of apartment buildings in Toropets with windows blown out from blast waves.

RFE/RL's Schemes project received satellite images from Planet Labs showing smoke over the territory of Toropets.

Earlier, satellite imagery from NASA showed multiple heat sources from the location and earthquake monitoring stations picked up seismic waves equal to a minor earthquake.

Tver regional Gov. Igor Rudenya was quoted by the local government as saying in the afternoon that no deaths or serious injuries had been reported as a result of the incident, which he earlier said was caused when debris from a downed drone sparked a fire. He also said evacuated residents were being allowed to return home and all public services and infrastructure were operational.

"The air-defense system worked, the UAVs were shot down, and a fire occurred when they fell," Mr. Rudenya wrote on Telegram around 3:30 a.m. local time, without saying what was burning. Mr. Rudenya said Russian air defenses were working to repel a "massive drone attack."

Reports indicated that the town is home to two Russian military units, one of which has been targeted by drone strikes twice in the past six months. Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported in 2018 that an arms depot was being constructed in Toropets, which has a population of around 11,000 people.

While Kyiv has not officially commented on the incident, a source in the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) told RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service on condition of anonymity that the SBU in cooperation with Ukraine's Intelligence and Special Operations Force launched the attack and "wiped the depot off the face of the Earth." The source said the depot stored Iskander and Tochka-U tactical missile systems, antiaircraft missiles and artillery ammunition.

"The SBU, together with its counterparts from the Defense Forces, continues to methodically reduce the enemy's missile potential, which it uses to destroy Ukrainian cities," the source said.

Other reports cited Ukrainian intelligence sources saying that the arms depot

held significant stocks of ballistic missiles obtained by Russia from North Korea as well as glide bombs, and that an area 4 miles wide was engulfed in flames.

Russian state media reported early in the morning that kindergartens and schools were temporarily closed in the Zapadnodvinsk district, which borders the Toropetsk district in the Tver region, without indicating why.

Residents of the village of Tsikarevo, which is located along a lake to the east of Toropets and only 200 meters from the arms depot, were initially experiencing difficulties being evacuated and were awaiting help. RFE/RL's North Realities reported that locals had written on local chat groups that safe access was only possible by boat and that "there was nothing left of the village."

One local wrote that people were stranded on the water waiting for help, and described seeing minor damage to homes in neighboring villages. Another, however, said that he had become "homeless."

Russia's Defense Ministry has not specifically commented on the incident, saying only that 54 Ukrainian drones had targeted five western Russian regions overnight and that all of the drones had been destroyed.

The Defense Ministry, without mentioning the Tver region, said that half of the drones had been shot down over the Kursk region, where Russian forces have launched a counterattack to push out Ukrainian forces that entered the region and took control of large swaths of Russian territory in a surprise incursion in August.

The rest of the drones, according to the Russian Defense Ministry, were shot down over the Bryansk, Smolensk, Oryol and Belgorod regions.

Regional authorities in the western Smolensk region bordering Belarus and in the Bryansk region bordering Ukraine also said drones had been shot down.

Satellite images revealed the devastation wrought by the massive Ukrainian drone

strike on the Russian arms depot in Toropets.

The images by Planet Labs published by Schemes, show smoke covering a large swath of territory over Toropets, hours after the attack.

Others taken by the space technology company Maxar showed that the strike left plumes of smoke and scattered fires over the location of the depot.

Mr. Zelenskyy, speaking after the attack on September 18, lauded the "very important" result of the Ukrainian military activity on Russian soil, without mentioning the Tver region specifically. "Very effective, spectacular, but not enough," he said.

According to the independent online news channel Verstka, the depot held munitions worth an estimated \$38 million. The depot was inaugurated in 2018 by former Russian Deputy Defense Minister Dmitry Bulgakov, currently jailed on corruption charges, who said at the time that the heavily fortified depot was "protected from air and missile strikes and even the damaging effects of a nuclear explosion."

Kyiv has previously said its strikes against Russia are intended to hit military, energy and transportation infrastructure that are key to Russia's ongoing attack on Ukraine.

Meanwhile in Ukraine, Russian drone and missile strikes targeted energy facilities in the northeastern city of Sumy. One person was killed in Kropyvnytskyi, the capital of the Kirovohrad region in central Ukraine.

(With additional reporting by RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

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Prestigious Michelin food guide gives first mention of Ukrainian restaurant in U.S.

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – A Ukrainian restaurant is the first of its kind in the U.S. to become eligible for a Michelin star from the prestigious French culinary rating guide for outstanding cooking.

Anelya, located in Chicago's Avondale neighborhood, earlier this month was one of three new eateries included in the tire company's food guide.

Offering a range of traditional and modern Ukrainian cuisine, Anelya is an ode and namesake to chef Johnny Clark's grandmother from whom he derived inspiration for the menu options, which are based on an intersection "of nostalgia, heritage and

modern cooking styles," he said.

The gourmet destination is known for its "array of hors d'oeuvres" that are "displayed on the zakusky [appetizer] cart loaded with the likes of sunflower seed hummus, tart roe tarts, and carrot salad," the Michelin guide said.

Reservations are preferred at the restaurant and meals usually range from \$50 to \$100. A bowl of the classic beetroot soup, known as borshch, costs about \$20.

"Stuffed cabbage, or holubtsi, features finely ground locally raised beef," the French culinary guide wrote about one of the main courses.

Pork ribs, blood sausage and smoked Boston mackerel are among other dinner



Some of Anelya restaurant's offerings include an appetizer food card sampler that features sunflower seeds and humus, as well as cured meats and cheese.



Facebook.com/AnelyaChicago

Chefs Johnny Clark and his spouse, Beverly Kim, opened Anelya in the Avondale neighborhood of Chicago in 2023. It has earned recognition from the prestigious French Michelin culinary rating institution.

options. Grilled king oyster and mushroom shish kabobs can be found on the menu, as well as the Transcarpathian dish of Banosh, which is comprised of grits, mushrooms and sheep's milk cheese.

Last year Mr. Clark visited "his grandmother's homeland – the city of Kharkiv. ... This trip inspired him to create a restaurant that would promote Ukrainian ... culinary traditions in the U.S." Motria Melnyk, president of Chicago's Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, said on social media.

The chef is a board member of the mainstay cultural institution in Chicago's Ukrainian Village neighborhood and his

wife, Korean-American Beverly Kim, is a partner in the venture.

Opened last year, Anelya first started as a pop-up eatery to provide humanitarian aid to Ukrainian refugees who fled Russia's all-out war against their homeland that began in February 2022.

The gourmand tandem also own Parachute on the same street in the neighborhood that offers Korean-inspired food. It once earned one out of the three stars that Michelin awards, but has scaled down to a more casual environment as a laid-

(Continued on page 7)

Ukraine invites U.N., Red Cross into captured Russian territory; Kremlin dismisses move

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service and RFE/RL's Russian Service

KYIV – Ukraine on September 16 invited the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit territory it has captured in its six-week-old military incursion into Russia's Kursk region to demonstrate its adherence to humanitarian law, in a move the Kremlin called a "provocation" even as it ordered Russia's army to beef up its ranks.

The Kremlin also expressed confidence through President Vladimir Putin's spokesman that the U.N. and the Red Cross would decline the Ukrainian invite.

Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Ministry published the open invitation for the humanitarian missions to Kursk hours after Foreign Affairs Minister Andriy Sybiha said that he had requested the invites during a weekend visit to the northeastern Sumy region, which borders Russia.

"Ukraine is ready to facilitate their work and prove its adherence to international humanitarian law," Mr. Sybiha said.

In an apparent attempt to contrast Ukrainian actions with accusations of widespread abuses by Russian troops since the full-scale invasion began in February 2022, Mr. Sybiha claimed that "[s]ince the first day of the Kursk operation, Ukraine's Defense Forces demonstrated full adherence to international humanitarian law as a professional army with high standards and values of freedom and human life. They ensured humanitarian assistance and safe passage to civilians."

"We expect that such provocative state-

ments will not be accepted by the addressees," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying. "This is a pure provocation."

Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Heorhiy Tykhiy countered that the Kremlin reaction "shows Russia's disregard for its own people and their humanitarian needs, as well as fear of allowing international observers to see the real situation. Quite telling."

Since its incursion began in Kursk in early August, Kyiv claims to have gained control of more than 500 square miles of Russian territory. Kyiv has hinted that the operation was intended to better position it in the event of peace talks amid some calls for more intense efforts to end the war.

On September 16, Kursk regional Gov. Aleksei Smirnov ordered residents in two districts – Ryisky and Khomutovsky – to evacuate settlements within 9 miles of the Ukrainian border.

Nearly 31 months into the full-scale invasion with Russian regular and mobilization forces reporting gains in eastern Ukraine and international debate mounting to better equip Ukrainian forces and lift restrictions on Kyiv's long-range attacks on Russian territory, Putin on September 16 reportedly ordered an increase in troop numbers in the Russian military by 180,000 individuals, to a total of 1.5 million soldiers.

Ukraine's General Staff, in its late briefing on September 16, said that fierce fighting was continuing in the Kursk region.

Earlier on September 16, Ukraine's air

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

A threat to global security

Russia's war on Ukraine has exposed not only Vladimir Putin's military aggression but also the challenges Ukraine faces in defending itself against a powerful adversary with far-reaching capabilities. Among the most pressing issues is Ukraine's plea to strike targets within Russia using Western-supplied weapons – it is an appeal that we have supported in this space on several occasions previously – though it has consistently been met with hesitation by Kyiv's Western allies. As the war continues with no end in sight, it's becoming increasingly evident that denying Ukraine this ability could have serious consequences for Ukraine and for global security.

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine has been bombarded by approximately 15,000 air and drone strikes, causing massive destruction and killing thousands of civilians. Russian forces have targeted critical infrastructure, leaving parts of the country in ruins and millions displaced. While Ukraine has fiercely defended its territory, it has repeatedly asked its Western allies for the capability to go beyond its borders and strike inside Russia to halt the attacks at their source.

The West's cautious stance is not entirely justified. Russia's missiles and drones have violated the airspace of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries, including Romania and Latvia, and have posed a threat to bordering states such as Poland and Bulgaria. Despite these provocations, NATO has refrained from taking more decisive military action, reflecting the alliance's reluctance to get directly involved in combat against Russia.

One of the key arguments for allowing Ukraine to strike Russian targets is that it would not necessarily escalate the war but rather limit Russia's ability to continue its aggression. Retired U.S. Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges noted that Russia has grown increasingly emboldened by the West's cautious approach, continuing to push boundaries with little consequence. The failure to confront Russian provocations only strengthens Putin's resolve. By giving Ukraine the green light to target Russian military installations, the West could significantly weaken Russia's offensive capabilities, particularly its missile and drone-launching sites.

Furthermore, allowing Ukraine to strike deeper into Russia would force the Kremlin to divert resources to defend its own territory, thereby reducing the intensity of its operations in Ukraine. This would not only bolster Ukraine's defense but also protect NATO member states that are inadvertently being drawn into the conflict through drone and missile incursions.

NATO's reluctance to approve Ukrainian strikes inside Russia is largely rooted in fears of escalating the conflict. The logic is that such actions would provoke Moscow, possibly leading to a broader conflict that could spill over into NATO member states. However, many military analysts argue that these concerns are overblown. The United States, for instance, routinely defends international shipping from Houthi missiles in the Red Sea and assists Israel in intercepting Iranian missiles without triggering broader conflicts.

We agree with Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Radek Sikorski, who has argued that Poland has a "duty" to shoot down Russian missiles over Ukraine, suggesting that the current level of restraint may no longer be tenable. As more Russian drones and missiles violate NATO airspace, the argument for a more proactive defense strategy is gaining traction.

We also support the position of outgoing NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who has warned against "isolationism" within the alliance and also noted that the stakes in the war go beyond Ukraine's borders. A Russian victory would embolden other authoritarian regimes and threaten the global security order.

Allowing Ukraine to strike military targets within Russia would send a clear message to Moscow that its aggression will not go unchecked. The West must acknowledge that its current strategy of limiting Ukraine's military options is not sustainable. By enabling Ukraine to defend itself more effectively, the West not only helps Ukraine but also strengthens global security.

Sept.
29
2021

Turning the pages back...

Three years ago, on September 29, 2021, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy laid flowers at the monument to the Kyiv residents who were among the 34,000 victims killed by Nazi Germany at Babyn Yar on September 28-29, 1941.

Ukraine's parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, on September 22 passed an anti-Semitism law that aimed to "counteract and prevent anti-Semitism and its manifestations in Ukraine." The law also prohibited hate speech directed at Jews, their property, religious buildings or communities.

Also that month, the Cabinet of Ministers granted life-long stipends to Ukrainians who rescued Jews in the country during World War II. Awards would pass to surviving family members of people recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by the Israeli Institute of Disaster and Heroism of the National Holocaust Memorial and Heroism of Yad Vashem. More than 2,600 Ukrainians have been recognized by Yad Vashem, and in 2021, 26 individuals had begun to receive stipends.

A group of billionaires and oligarchs led by Mikhail Fridman (Russian), Pavel Fuks (a native of Kharkiv Oblast, who made his fortune in Russia), German Khan (Russian, Ukrainian and Israeli), as well as Viktor Pinchuk (Ukrainian) had a controversial project for the Babyn Yar memorial park. Vladislav Davidson, the chief editor of Odessa Review, called Russian filmmaker Ilya Khrzhanovsky – who planned to turn the site into a "Holocaust Disneyland" that would include role-playing of visitors taking on the role of Jews or Nazis – "megalomaniacal."

(Continued on page 12)

Calls grow...

(Continued from page 4)

Perhaps the most senior Western official to call for a more robust Western response to Russian missiles and drones was Polish Foreign Affairs Minister Radek Sikorski. In a recent interview with the United Kingdom's Financial Times, Mr. Sikorski said that Poland had a "duty" to shoot down Russian missiles over Ukraine.

NATO has rejected such calls.

"Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian drone fragments and missiles have been found on allied territory on several occasions. These acts are irresponsible and potentially dangerous," a NATO official who didn't want to be named told RFE/RL in a written statement.

"While we recognize the right of every ally to protect its own airspace, what individual allies do in support of Ukraine can also matter for NATO as a whole. Allies will continue to consult on further steps to protect and defend allied territory. What is clear is that NATO will not become a party to the conflict," the official added.

But some military analysts argue that helping Kyiv down drones and missiles over Ukraine, along with intercepting and eliminating aerial threats that stray into the territory of neighboring countries, would not be an escalation. They argue that failure to do so is only emboldening Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Russia has been pressing us in so many places, increasingly confident that we won't actually do anything," argued Ben Hodges, a retired U.S. lieutenant general and former commander of U.S. Army forces in Europe. "It's well past time to take more active steps to help Ukraine win as well as to protect innocent people," Mr. Hodges told RFE/RL.

"All countries have the absolute right for self-defense and control of their air, land and sea space. China and Russia routinely violate those spaces. States have the right under international law to shoot down unidentified craft in their airspace," argued Alexander Crowther, a retired U.S. Army infantry colonel and senior research fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), a Washington-based think tank, in comments to RFE/RL.

This comes as the West, namely the United States, weighs whether to allow Ukraine to use Western-supplied missiles to strike military targets deeper inside Russia, especially now that Russia has reportedly received more deadly missiles from Iran.

Ukrainian officials pressed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his British counterpart, David Lammy, on this during a visit to Kyiv on September 11.

The NATO official speaking to RFE/RL on background said the military alliance had "made unprecedented contributions to Ukraine's defenses, spending roughly 40 billion euros a year to support Ukraine militarily."

NATO 'air-defense shield'

Fredrik Wesslau, a former Swedish diplomat and fellow at the Stockholm Center for Eastern European Studies, recently laid out in the U.S.-based Foreign Affairs journal a proposal for NATO to protect its eastern flank and provide western Ukraine with much-needed air cover.

"The idea is to deploy ground and air assets from NATO allies, so, for instance, Patriot systems, or F-16 [fighter jets] to Poland, Slovakia and Romania on their side of the border with Ukraine, at strategic locations, and use these assets to intercept Russian drones and missiles that first of all, enter the airspace of these allies, but also to intercept them over Ukrainian territory when they're heading toward NATO and

NATO allies," Mr. Wesslau explained to RFE/RL in an interview.

Some analysts have argued that such plans present logistical challenges.

"If you're going to engage targets over Ukrainian airspace, there needs to be some kind of coordination mechanism so that Ukrainian weapons don't conflict with NATO weapons and the identification of Russian missiles is clear to all sides," William Taylor, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO, recently told Australia's ABC News.

Involving at least two command-and-control arrangements and multiple countries identifying friendly versus enemy targets, "would make it difficult," Mr. Taylor said. "The best case is when there is one system."

"Well, I think for this to work, there would have to be a degree of integration with Ukrainian air defense," Mr. Wesslau countered. "I mean, to some extent, this already exists today, but I think the idea is that this would be, you know, this air-defense shield would be operated by a coalition of the willing."

"I understand that NATO does not want to confront Russia, however, individual states can defend their own airspace. Note that Turkey, a NATO member, shot down a Russian aircraft that violated their airspace in 2015," Mr. Crowther added, referring to an incident that Putin referred to as "a stab in the back."

The United States has already proved it is willing to take such action elsewhere, Mr. Hodges pointed out.

"We do this in the Red Sea, defending international shipping against Houthi missiles and Israeli citizens from Iranian missiles. Why can't we protect innocent Ukrainian civilians from Russian missiles?" Mr. Hodges asked.

More than 300 missiles and drones were fired from Iran toward Israel late on April 13, but virtually all were intercepted before entering Israeli territory. U.S., British and Israeli forces destroyed nearly all the projectiles.

"Shaheds [Iranian military drones] in the skies above Ukraine sound identical to those over the Middle East. The impact of ballistic missiles, if they are not intercepted, is the same everywhere," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tweeted on April 15.

Later that same day, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby was asked by reporters why the United States and allies had shot down Iranian drones over Israel but not Ukraine.

"Two different conflicts, different air-space, different threat picture. And the president has been clear since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine that the United States is not going to be involved in ... that conflict in a combat role," Mr. Kirby said.

However, the ground could be shifting, albeit gradually, with Ukraine's Western allies less likely to take a cautious approach.

"Well, look, I think the more we don't react, the greater the risk becomes, in a sense, because it's quite clear that Russia is prodding and pushing and testing, and if there's no response, it pushes further. And this, in a sense, increases the stakes and also increases the danger of escalation," Mr. Wesslau said.

"Some allies are opposed, some are for, but I think this is one of these things, which will become more topical as time goes on, and as we see more and more of these incursions by Russian drones and missiles."

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Russian Orthodox...

(Continued from page 2)

(Novayagazeta.ru, January 23).

The second phase of the ROC's campaign in Africa was associated with the inauguration of the second Russia-Africa Summit in St. Petersburg on July 27-28, 2023. Patriarch Kirill spoke at length about Russia's strategy in Africa and the role of the ROC therein. Speaking at the plenary session on July 27, he emphasized the deep roots of Christian Orthodoxy in Africa that stretch back to the last quarter of the 19th century. He highlighted that, "unlike the colonists from the West, Russia has never seen Africa as an object of colonization ... or a source of profit [and] never spoken with African nations in an arrogant tone. ... That is why during hardships, we [Russia and African nations] could always rely on each other" (Exarchate-africa.ru, July 27, 2023).

Later on, Kirill revealed that, "over the past year and a half, the Patriarchal Exarchate had opened more than 200 parishes in more than 25 African countries." He added that "many people appreciate the fact that we are a Church that does not distort God-given norms of morality in pursuit of new ideological brands" (Interfax.ru, July 27, 2023). In addition to Russian politicians and propagandists, the ROC is also using "conservative" rhetoric in its attempts to increase Russia's popularity in Africa. For instance, hieromonk Stefan (Igumnov) stated, "The world is going through an epoch of changes. We are crossing some sort of milestone, after which the global order will look different. ... Russia and African countries can set an example for the rest of the world. ... We need to find a new model of collaboration between nations and countries. ... By working together, Russia and Africa could offer this to the world" (Interaffairs.ru, July 28, 2023).

Aside from traditional rhetoric, the summit also demonstrated the link between the ROC and some of the large Russian state-sponsored corporations that are promoting Moscow's interests in Africa. Russian Presidential Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, who is the subject of an International Criminal Court warrant for her role in abducting and re-educating Ukrainian children, said that, "on the basis of the ROC, we [Russia] are completing various humanitarian projects aimed at helping [African] children. ... We are conducting talks with several companies that are present in Africa, such as Rusal, Rosatom, JSCo RZhD [Russian Railways]" (Interfax.ru, July 27, 2023).

The third stage of the ROC's campaign commenced this year and has already been marked by the highest number of African countries to join the church's ranks. According to Konstantin of Zaraisk, 218 African priests from 17 different African countries - who work and "feed" commu-

nities in 29 African countries - are officially part of the ROC (Exarchate-africa.ru, February 7).

Moscow is already leveraging the ROC's growing influence to recruit more Africans to join the Russian Armed Forces to fight in Ukraine. African students working and living in Russia who are there to reconstruct ROC monasteries in Ryazan Oblast are reportedly joining the Russian army (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, February 23; Exarchate-africa.ru, February 24). While Russian officials and ROC representatives deny these reports, officials in the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" have confirmed them (VKontakte, February 21; RTVI, June 12).

According to an investigative report by Novaya Gazeta Europe, "Orthodox oligarch" Konstantin Malofeev may be facilitating and coordinating the recruitment of African mercenaries. Mr. Malofeev previously sponsored Igor Girkin (Strelkov) during his military "adventures" in the Donbas back in 2014. The report found that nationals from Burundi, Kenya, Cameroon, Madagascar and Uganda have been allegedly identified in photographs of Russian forces in the occupied territories. They came to Russia as "students of the Nikolo-Ugreshskaya Orthodox Spiritual Seminary," took part in construction projects, and reportedly ended up fighting in Ukraine. According to one African student, the Russo-Chinese cultural center "Zhar-ptitsa" (Firebird), located in the Yakimanka district in Moscow, manages the recruitment process. "Seminary students" were also reportedly recruited to conduct "construction projects" in Ryazan, Moscow, Tver, Yaroslavl and Kirov oblasts. Novaya Gazeta Europe was able to substantiate that at least 26 such African "students" were recruited by the "Zhar-ptitsa" center (Novaya Gazeta, March 4). The exact number of foreign students fighting in Ukraine is unknown, but pro-Russian sources say that between 4,000 (Ura.news, December 19, 2023) and 18,000 (Vsednr.ru, February 28) foreign nationals are fighting on the Russian side. The number of Africans recruited via the ROC, however, remains unknown.

Despite the anti-colonial rhetoric, Russian recruiters may view Africa, with over 1.3 billion people and 54 countries, as an intriguing and potentially lucrative market. Low living standards and social security, a drive toward conservatism and the declining popularity of the West coupled with Russia's growing involvement in continental affairs could become a useful tool for Moscow in Ukraine. The ROC's expansion into Africa and its connection to African students fighting in the war demonstrates an important part of the church's role for the Kremlin in waging the "long war" against Ukraine.

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Prestigious...

(Continued from page 5)

back area pub.

The couple both are recipients of a James Beard culinary award, the most prestigious given in the U.S. They shared the award in 2019 while residing in Mr. Clark's hometown area of Cincinnati before moving to Chicago to open the Korean restaurant.

"He's the kind of guy that makes you believe that, if you're good, work hard and you treat people well, you'll be successful," Mr. Clark's former occupational superior, Josh Fried, told the Cincinnati Inquirer in 2019.

Mr. Clark told the newspaper that he had

"barely made it through high school" because of "serious attention deficit disorder."

Entry into the culinary world first started in the kitchen washing dishes at the age of 15, the Cincinnati Inquirer reported. Mr. Clark would eventually study at the famed Culinary Institute of America before moving back to Cincinnati when he took an interest in French culinary cooking. He then moved on to New York and Korea before arriving in Chicago where he met his future wife, Ms. Kim.

The tandem have three children and live across the street from their first restaurant.

Anelya restaurant is located at 3472 N. Elston Avenue, Chicago, Ill. The restaurant opens 5 p.m. and can be reached by telephone at 773-692-2192.

Moscow takes...

(Continued from page 2)

ly (Kommersant, September 13).

Another purpose of Putin's démarche is likely to deepen the apparent disagreements between the United States and its European allies, always a priority in his foreign policy (Kommersant, September 11). The new British government has taken the lead in granting Ukraine the right to use Storm Shadow missiles for strikes inside Russia. Moscow's defamation of six British diplomats as spies and the publication of their photos was supposed to be punishment for this "hostile" course (Rossiiskaya Gazeta, September 13). France, which a few months ago was vilified for starting the debate on sending NATO troops to Ukraine, remains silent on the use of its SCALP-EG long-range missiles. The Kremlin may be betting on a cautious course for Michel Barnier's fragile government (Nezavisimaya Gazeta, June 4; Novaya Gazeta Europe, September 9). Moscow is placing particular attention on Germany, where the government coalition has been shaken by defeats in the regional elections of Saxony and Thuringia (RIAC, September 3). Chancellor Olaf Scholz signals intentions to propose a peace plan for Ukraine, while the question about the Taurus KEPD 350 long-range missile has disappeared from his agenda, much to the consternation of Ukrainians (Forbes.ru, September 3; NV.ua, September 10).

Putin's own attempts to establish that strikes with Western missiles are a "completely different story" from the strikes with Ukrainian missiles and drones betray the falsity of his threats (RIA Novosti, September 14). The U.S.-supplied Army Tactical Missile Systems, or ATACMS, can carry a powerful warhead upwards of 186 miles. Ukrainian drones, nevertheless, already reach as far as the Olenya air base on the Kola Peninsula, and strikes have caused an oil depot in the Rostov region to burn for two weeks (Meduza, September 14). The U.S.-supplied M142 HIMARS artillery rocket systems have been effective in destroying bridges and pontoon crossings over the Seim River in Russia's Kursk region (TopWar.ru, August 21). Additionally, the first squadron of F-16 fighters has engaged in intercepting Russian missile

strikes on Ukrainian cities (RBC, September 9). Moscow has defined none of these upgrades in Ukrainian capabilities as a breach of its "red lines." Nevertheless, the prospect of Storm Shadow missile strikes prompted Sergei Karaganov, the leading Russian advocate for nuclear escalation, to suggest a strike on Berlin (Kommersant, September 11).

Well-targeted strikes with medium-range missiles can make some difference by denying the Russian Air Force the use of its forward bases. Ukraine's offensive in Kursk, nonetheless, has made a greater impact on the trajectory of the "long war" (Novaya Gazeta Europe, September 11). Putin has downplayed this debacle and devised a dual strategy of stepping up attacks on Pokrovsk in the Donbas region of Ukraine and slowly pushing the over-extended Ukrainian brigades from captured Russian territory (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 3, Meduza, September 14).

Six weeks into the Ukrainian operation, this strategy has failed in both directions. The defenses around Pokrovsk still hold, while Russian counterattacks in Kursk are being met with concentrated fire and smart maneuvers (The Insider, September 14). Putin's fixation on the notion of holding the strategic initiative prevents the necessary alterations of his flawed strategy and condemns Russian forces to degradation from heavy casualties (MediaZone, September 13).

Any setback on the fluid battlefield may cause another swing of Putin's mood from overconfidence to angst, thus triggering a new bout of nuclear brinkmanship. U.S. and European policymakers have learned this pattern and gained experience in calibrating responses that neither dismiss the blackmail nor yield to it. Symbolic declarations that "grant" Ukraine the right to use Western weapons as it deems necessary are not helpful, but expanding practical work with the Ukrainian command on precise targeting to minimize civilian casualties is needed. Geopolitical caution reminds us that Putin's declarations are bluffs until they are not, though the same is true about the firmness of his grip on power.

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Bishop Basil Losten...

(Continued from page 1)

youngest of 10 children in a family of Ukrainian immigrants. His parents, Ivan (John) Losten and Julia Petryshyn, operated a dairy farm where young Basil earned the nickname "milkman," a term of endearment he carried from his time at St. Basil's Prep School in Stamford, Conn., where he graduated in 1949.

Bishop Losten's path to the priesthood led him to St. Basil's College Seminary, where he graduated in 1953 with a bachelor's degree in philosophy, and later to St. Josaphat Major Seminary in Washington, D.C., where he earned a licentiate in sacred theology in 1957 from The Catholic University of America. He was ordained that same year by Bishop Constantine Bohachovsky and soon became known for his dedication to pastoral service, holding various positions in the Archeparchy of Philadelphia of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

Rising swiftly through the ranks of the Ukrainian Catholic hierarchy, Bishop Losten was named Papal Chamberlain in 1968 and ordained as auxiliary bishop of Philadelphia in 1971. In 1977, he was appointed Bishop of Stamford, where he would remain until his retirement at age 75 in 2006.

Bishop Losten was a tireless advocate

for education and priestly vocations, establishing a diocesan newspaper and supporting numerous publications. His work extended beyond the Stamford Eparchy, reaching into Ukraine, where he was an indefatigable fundraiser for the church's post-Soviet revival. His efforts helped rebuild churches, including the Holy Resurrection Sobor in Kyiv, and he channeled millions of dollars toward restoring Ukrainian Catholic institutions that had been suppressed for nearly half a century.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Bishop Losten was deeply involved in Catholic-Jewish dialogue as part of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). After his retirement, he continued to support numerous Ukrainian cultural and religious institutions, including the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford and the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine.

Bishop Losten's episcopal motto, "Fortitude," encapsulated his lifelong commitment to the church and his unyielding dedication to his mission. He is survived by his nieces, Michelle, Jan, Anna Jean, and nephews, Michael, Albert, William, and their families, along with many friends and members of the Ukrainian Catholic faithful.

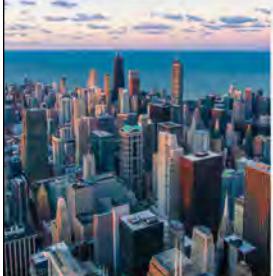
In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Basil Ukrainian Catholic Seminary for the education of priests.

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'Golden Shadows' exhibit by Rukh Art Hub shimmers and shines in downtown New York

by Nicholas Gordon

NEW YORK – Radiant renaissance-style paintings and cool, white sculptures balance out the latest art exhibit by the Ukrainian arts organization Rukh Art Hub, showing at the Mriya Gallery through September 22.

The exhibit features the work of two prominent Ukrainian artists, Tata Kolesnik, who has 27 paintings on display, and Tetiana Albitska-Kostomorova, who has 6 sculptures in the exhibition. Over 100 people attended the exhibit's opening reception on September 12.

The exhibit is part of an ongoing collaboration between Rukh Art Hub and Mriya Gallery, "the first Ukrainian art gallery in New York City," as stated on its website. Together they have produced several exhibits over the past year featuring the works of established and emerging contemporary Ukrainian artists.

With the goal of creating "a vibrant and dynamic exhibit that bridges Ukrainian and New York communities," as stated in the press release, "Golden Shadows" celebrates and explores both inner lives and the "collective soul of humanity." Female images are a central theme, representing women who are "courageous, wholesome and strong," the press release says.

For Ms. Kolesnik and Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova, both of whom are Ukrainian refugees who fled Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine and who are now living in Germany, the chance to exhibit their works in the city struck them as a fantastical notion. Neither has ever been to New York.

"Growing up in Ukraine, the words 'New York' always seemed unreal to me, like a fantasy destination," Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova said through a translator during a Zoom interview. "It's an unbelievable feeling to have my works exhibited in New York now, especially while I'm in another part of the world."

Ms. Kolesnik said she is pleased with all of the positive feedback her work is getting from the exhibit, and amused by the idea that her paintings are now living a new global and glamorous life without her.

"That's the power of art," Ms. Kolesnik said. "Our artworks are free and boundless, and living more interesting lives than we are."

Indeed, Ms. Kolesnik's paintings in the exhibit appear boundless, transporting the viewer to realms beyond the mundane. In a color palette spanning earth tones of olive, auburn, peach and charcoal, to bolder tones of cobalt, orange and rose, with shades of gold that shimmer in the light, the lush and vivid artworks depict realistic imagery and religious iconography infused with "the metaphorical sensitivity of the Renaissance," according to the press release.

Ms. Kolesnik's work is inspired by classi-

cal myths, renaissance art, universal archetypes and personal experiences. She has honed a unique style that blends elements of modern and classical, spiritual and earthly. The figures in her paintings exude a refined sensuality of expression, and a kind of muted eroticism revealed in flashes of skin showing among the heavy drapery of their clothing and prominent headwraps, and in gentle touch.

Fruit, flowers, tattoos, armor and piercings are frequent motifs, with motherland details woven into the works, such as sunflowers, the Ukrainian Coat of Arms, or blue and yellow ribbons signifying the colors of the Ukrainian flag braided into a woman's hair. Playful nods to modernity pop up with figures wearing AirPods, safety pins being used as eyebrow piercings or bubbles being blown with pink chewing gum.

Some of Ms. Kolesnik's paintings directly address the trauma of the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine. The painting "Connection," which she created in the spring of 2022 shortly after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, shows two women sitting together, one wearing a dress and the other wearing military clothing.

"There are now two realities of destruction and more peaceful life in Ukraine," Ms. Kolesnik explained. "It's the feeling of being in the war and not in the war at the same time. There's unity and duality and contrast in the experiences of those who go to fight for our country, and those who stay at home to raise our children and protect our normal way of life."

Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova's whimsical white poly stone sculptures are displayed at intervals around the gallery, adding dimension and nuance to the exhibit, a white glow reflecting and permeating all the gold. The sculptures, smooth and fluid, are of voluptuous female figures who frolic and lounge blissfully, celebrating "physical life in all its manifestations," as stated in the press release.

Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova, who also shares her sculptures with the visually impaired and has works displayed in galleries and museums across Europe and the U.S., welcomes viewers to touch the sculptures for a deeper level of sensual engagement.

"When you touch the sculptures and feel the lines and curves, it offers another feeling, another vision," Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova said.

Acknowledging that it's been difficult to start new artworks with the ongoing war in Ukraine, Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova said she currently has some sketches for her next series, "Motherhood," which will explore women's roles during a time of war, as they nurture and support their families.

While Ms. Kolesnik and Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova have known each other for



Visitors attend the opening reception of the "Golden Shadows" art exhibit organized by Rukh Art Hub at New York's Mriya Gallery on September 12. Over 100 people attended the reception. The exhibit runs until September 22.



The painting "Connection" by Tata Kolesnik is one of 27 of Ms. Kolesnik's works featured in the exhibit "Golden Shadows" by Rukh Art Hub at the Mriya Gallery.

years through the art scene in their native city of Kharkiv, Ukraine, this is their first exhibition together.

Ms. Albitska-Kostomorova said that through the process of participating in the exhibit she has seen the incredible work done by the Rukh Art Hub team in helping to bring Ukrainian art to the U.S. and global audiences.

Rukh Art Hub co-founders Mariia Manuilenko and Olga Severina, who prior to their collaboration with Mriya Gallery organized a dozen Ukrainian art exhibitions in cities across the U.S., expressed gratitude for their new opportunities to share the work of Ukrainian artists with the world.

"That's what we love about New York; it's about the connections you can make, and the speed at which you can make them," Ms. Severina said. "New York helps you move faster towards your goals."

As the Ukrainian word "ruk" means movement, movement is of course a key feature of the Rukh Art Hub mission.

"We are always moving forward, creating new experiences and exhibits every time," Ms. Severina said.

Ms. Severina explained that through their growing art world connections in New York they've been able to have the works of Ukrainian artists added to the Metropolitan Museum of Art Library. Potential collaborations with the Whitney Museum and the Brooklyn Museum lie ahead.

Ms. Manuilenko noted that, as a curator in her native city of Kharkiv before the war, it was challenging to find gallery space for local artists to exhibit even just a few hours

away in Kyiv. Now, however, they are able to exhibit frequently in New York City, one of the largest and most competitive art markets on the planet.

Over a recent period of 10 days, the teams from Rukh Art Hub and Mriya Gallery had two additional exhibits, a fundraising gala event in the Hamptons in which they raised \$32,000 to help support Ukrainian children affected by the war, and the Volta New York Art Fair.

Up next is their exhibit titled "Water Drops on Burning Rocks" that opens on October 19, and a collaboration with The Ukrainian Museum for Community Activation, a day of art, music and community activities that runs from noon to 5 p.m. on October 5 at 222 East 6th street in New York's historic Ukrainian Village district.

In the meantime, they are welcoming visitors to come enjoy the art of "Golden Shadows."

Ms. Kolesnik and Ms. Severina described how viewers of the artworks become key collaborators with the artists in a sense, adding layers of meaning and deepening the artworks' significance as viewers bring their own experiences, interpretations and perceptions to the paintings and sculptures.

"It's wonderful to hear about people's personal experience with the paintings," Ms. Kolesnik said. "Arousing personal stories and feelings of wonder and tenderness and compassion in viewers is part of our artistic joy and what the art is made for."

Information on upcoming Ukrainian art exhibits can be found at rukharthub.com and mriya.nyc.



Visitors view portions of the "Golden Shadows" art exhibit organized by Rukh Art Hub at New York's Mriya Gallery on September 12.

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“This is genius. Putin declares a big portion of the Ukraine ... as independent. Oh, that's wonderful. He used the word 'independent' and 'we're gonna go out and we're gonna go in and we're gonna help keep peace.' You gotta say that's pretty savvy.”

DONALD TRUMP, Republican candidate for U.S. President,
"The Clay Travis and Buck Sexton Show" February 22, 2022

“I gotta be honest with you. I don't really care what happens to Ukraine one way or another.”

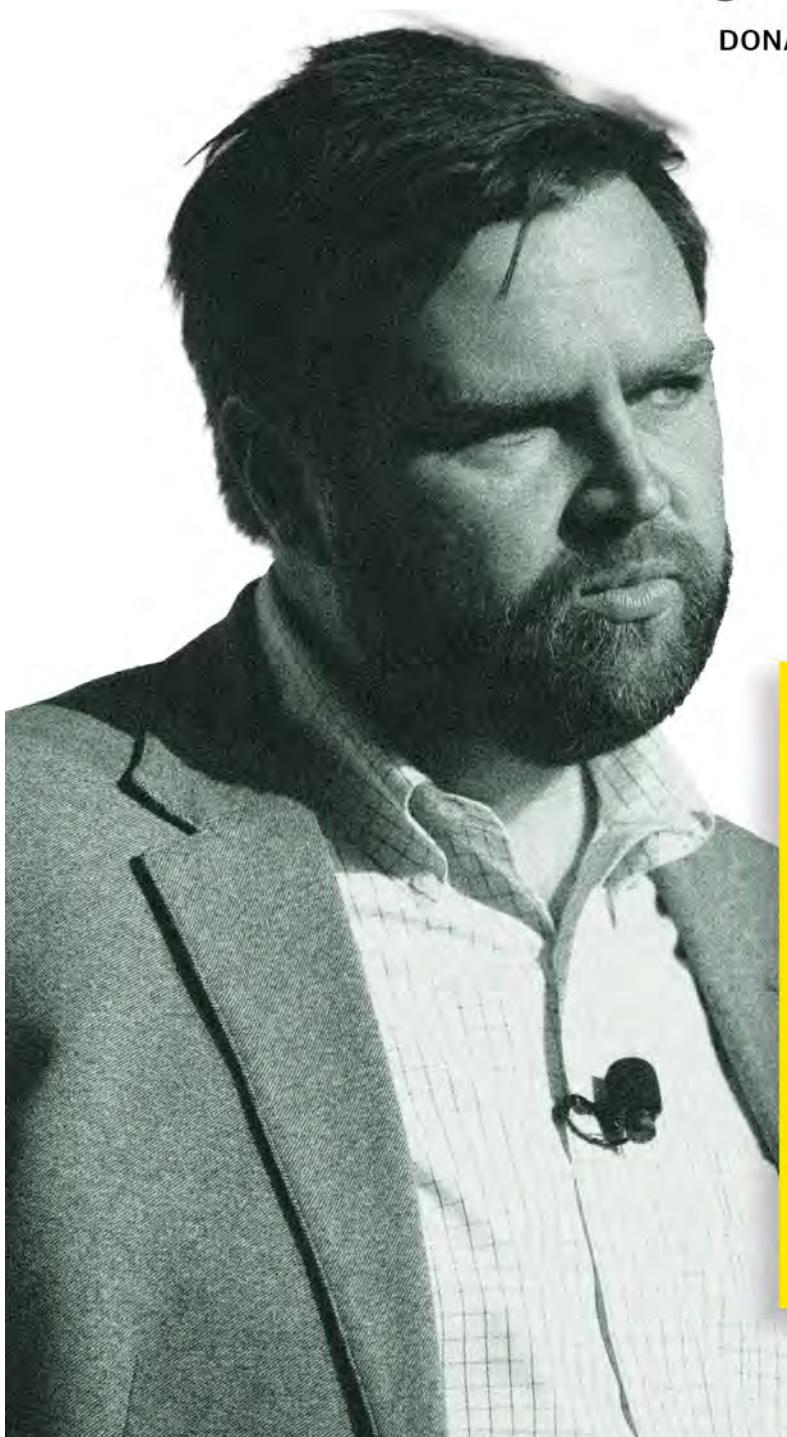
JD VANCE, Business Insider, February 2022

“We're getting easily half a trillion dollars in the hole for the Ukraine conflict by the time this is done ... Why? So that one of Zelensky's ministers can buy a bigger yacht? Kiss my ass ...”

JD VANCE, Steve Bannon podcast, December 2023

“I would encourage Russia “to do whatever the hell they want” to any NATO member country that does not meet spending guidelines. “I said ‘Everybody's gonna pay ... If you don't pay, no, I won't protect you.’”

DONALD TRUMP, at a campaign rally, February 2024



MAGA Members of Congress, for more than six months, delayed \$61 billion of essential aid to Ukraine. Then, during the final vote in April 2024, JD VANCE VOTED “NAY!” AND LED SENATE EFFORTS OPPOSING THE AID!

A vote for Donald Trump & JD Vance is a vote against Ukraine.

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“In our nation’s 248 year history, there has never been an individual who is a greater threat to our republic than Donald Trump ... he can never be trusted with power again ... That is why I will be casting my vote for Vice President Kamala Harris.”

DICK CHENEY, former Vice President

“A person who admires autocrats and murderous dictators. A person that has nothing but contempt for our democratic institutions, our Constitution, and the rule of law.”

GENERAL JOHN KELLY, former Trump White House Chief of Staff

“He shouldn’t be anywhere near the Oval Office.”

BILL BARR, former Trump Attorney General

“After over a year in this job, I cannot understand Putin’s hold on Trump.”

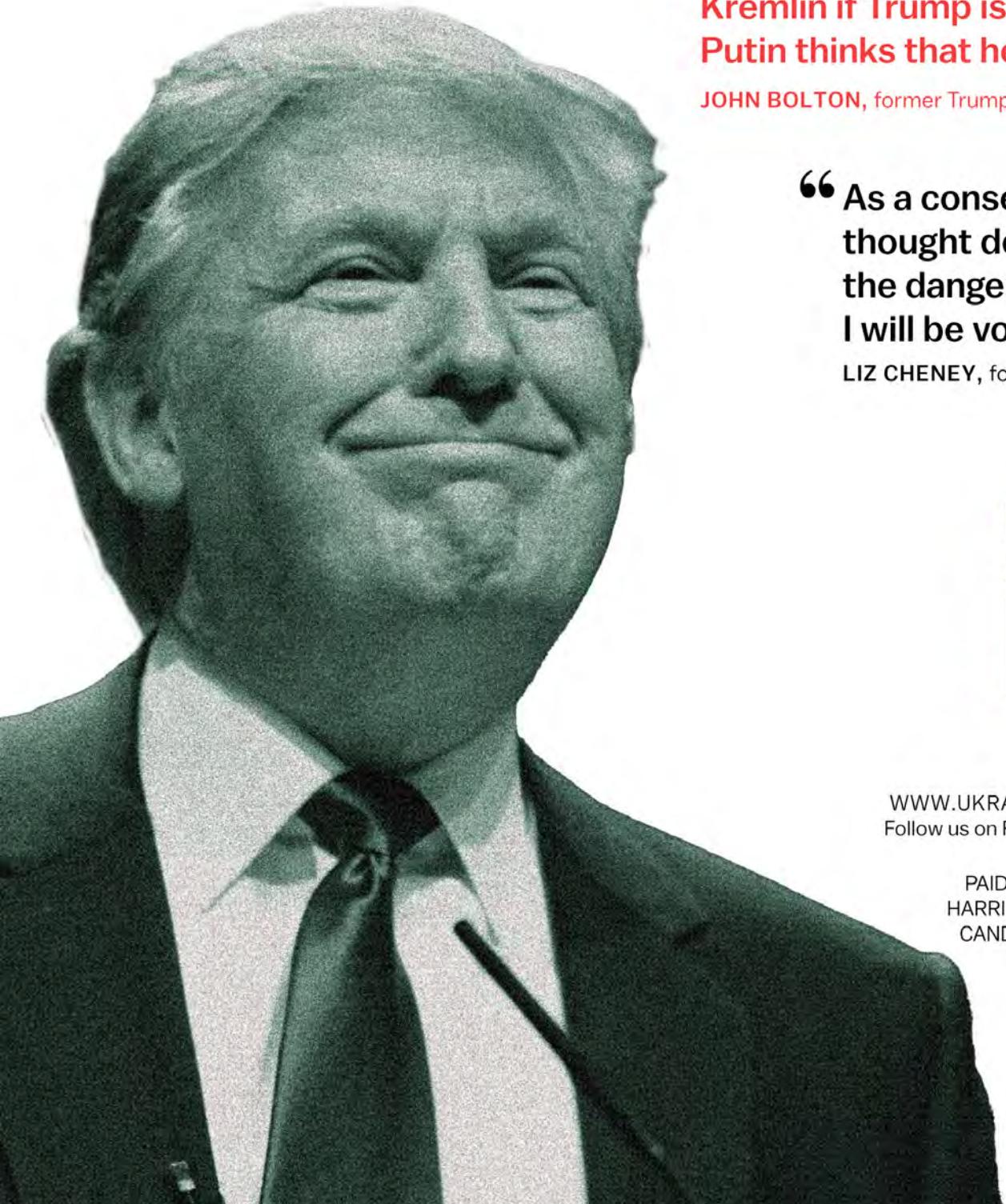
H.R. McMASTER, former Trump National Security Advisor

“There will be celebrations in the Kremlin if Trump is elected ... Putin thinks that he is an easy mark.”

JOHN BOLTON, former Trump National Security Advisor

“As a conservative who has thought deeply about this ... about the danger Donald Trump poses ... I will be voting for Kamala Harris.”

LIZ CHENEY, former Congresswoman



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Photo credit: Gage Skidmore at Flickr CC

Ukrainian Day Festival in Stamford, Conn., draws large crowds and political leaders pledging aid to Ukraine

by Alex Kuzma

STAMFORD, Conn. – St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Seminary and the parish of St. Volodymyr the Great hosted their traditional Ukrainian Day Festival on September 8. The event generated large and enthusiastic crowds of people from New York, New England and guests from as far away as Baltimore.

During the cultural program that featured several Ukrainian folk dancing ensembles from several states, Bishop Paul Chomnycky, the prelate of the Stamford Eparchy of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, introduced U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, thanking him for his staunch and steadfast support of Ukraine during all of the battles for U.S. funding in the U.S. Congress.

Among other visitors to the festival was



Lubow Wolynets (second from the left), curator of the Ukrainian Museum located on the grounds of St. Basil's Ukrainian Catholic Seminary, is pictured with U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (second from the right), U.S. Rep. Jim Himes (left) and Bishop Paul Chomnycky.



Alex Kuzma

U.S. Rep. Jim Himes (back row, left), Bishop Paul Chomnycky (back row, center) and U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (back row, right) and children from many different Ukrainian dance ensembles are pictured during the Ukrainian Day Festival in Stamford, Conn., on September 8.

U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, ranking member of the U.S. House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, who also addressed the audience and pledged his support for Ukraine.

Following their brief speeches, Bishop Chomnycky escorted Messrs. Blumenthal and Himes to the Ukrainian Museum on the seminary grounds, where they met with the long-time museum curator Lubow Wolynets.

The group marveled at the beauty of the

old Quintard Estate Manor and some of the remarkable artwork it has accumulated over the decades.

Ms. Wolynets explained the importance of the portrait of Metropolitan Archbishop Andrei Sheptytsky, who led the efforts to rescue Jewish children from the Holocaust with the help of many Ukrainian Catholics – both clergy and laity, especially his brother Abbott Clementiy and the Studite Monks of the Univ Monastery.

Kyiv honors...

(Continued from page 1)

involves interaction, so they urge Kyiv residents and guests to scan QR codes to watch fragments of the film that Mr. Gongadze shot in Georgia.

The videos also show him at the Chervona Ruta Song Festival, underscoring that Mr. Gongadze was not only a fan of Ukrainian journalism, but also of culture and statehood. Alley visitors can also use the codes to hear fragments of the song "Spytai!" (Ask!), a musical manifesto written by Misko Barbara and Yurko Chopyk in reaction to Mr. Gongadze's disappearance in September 2000.

Every year, more and more new faces come to honor Mr. Gongadze's memory. Many are young journalists who learned about his death when they were schoolchildren or perhaps when they entered the profession.

Tetiana Teren, executive director of PEN Ukraine and the initiator of the Heorhiy Gongadze Prize, says that when they gather in different parts of Kyiv every year on September 16, she thinks about the strength of Mr. Gongadze's personality.

"Most of the people who come to these events did not know Heorhiy, did not cross paths with him at protests, in the Verkhovna Rada, at the Chervona Ruta festival, for example. Most of us learned about his death from the news. Perhaps later we read about him in textbooks, in other informational materials, but he was not a part of our daily life – this moment here and now. But he is such a strong and attractive figure that even decades after his death, new people join the profession for whom his example is important, for whom it is important to continue what he did," Ms. Teren said at the alley's opening.

"For me, the story of Gia Gongadze is a story about people of compromise and people of self-sacrifice. I am sure that there were many colleagues next to Heorhiy who chose a different path, who chose to remain silent, who chose not to help Heorhiy," said Myroslava Barchuk, a Ukrainian journalist.



A temporary memorial alley honoring Heorhiy Gongadze consists of informational banners about the journalist's life and work. The memorial aims to highlight Mr. Gongadze's contribution to the establishment of civil society and democracy in Ukraine.

television presenter and vice president of PEN Ukraine who knew Mr. Gongadze personally.

"The disappearance of Heorhiy Gongadze was a great shock for Ukrainians, and the next shock was the release of the so-called Melnychenko tapes. We still do not know the truth about Heorhiy's murder, who ordered his killing. The country has never seen the real recordings or the original tapes. The society has not learned the truth about the orders of the murder. The fact that we know that police general Oleksiy Pukach murdered Heorhiy and that he is serving a life sentence is an extraordinary achievement. This is an extraordinary achievement because in such cases justice is not always, not often, brought at least to the perpetrators," said Valentyna Telichenko, a human rights activist and representative of the Gongadze family.

"Some people think that a journalist is not serious, that one can oppose his or her activities, hide the truth with impunity, and kill journalists. But it doesn't work that way. The protests that began after Heorhiy's murder were a preparation for the Orange

Revolution," says Olga Salo, deputy director general of the National Memorial Complex of the Heavenly Hundred Heroes at the Museum of the Revolution of Dignity.

The memorial event dedicated to the 24th anniversary of Mr. Gongadze's murder ended with the laying of flowers on his grave.

The Heorhiy Gongadze Prize is an award and an ecosystem of initiatives for independent journalists founded by PEN Ukraine in partnership with the Business School of the

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and Ukrainska Pravda. The prize is awarded once a year on May 21, Mr. Gongadze's birthday. Along with the award itself, the organization also works to develop Ukrainian journalism through educational projects.

Mr. Gongadze disappeared on September 16, 2000. Two months later, in November, his headless body was discovered in a forest near Tarashcha, in the Kyiv region of the country. In 2009, a skull fragment was found in the same region and the Prosecutor General's Office confirmed it belonged to Mr. Gongadze.

In 2011, the prosecutor's office filed a case against former President Leonid Kuchma, but it was dismissed by the court later that year. On January 31, 2011, the court ruled that the murder was not ordered by Mr. Kuchma.

In January 2013, Oleksiy Pukach, the former head of the Interior Ministry's surveillance department, was sentenced to life in prison for Mr. Gongadze's murder.

The investigation identified former Interior Minister Yuri Kravchenko, who had died years earlier, as the individual who ordered Mr. Gongadze's killing. According to authorities, Mr. Kravchenko committed suicide in 2005 by shooting himself twice in the head.

Mr. Gongadze's body was finally laid to rest on March 22, 2016, in Kyiv. His family maintains that the true masterminds behind the murder have yet to be brought to justice.

Turning...

(Continued from page 6)

Jewish dissident Josef Zissels called the project a "Trojan Horse" by the Kremlin, with Vladimir Putin's design to paint Ukrainians as anti-Semites, nationalists, fascists and Nazis.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) informed the Cabinet of Ministers of the risks posed by the memorial center and the potential for it to be used to discredit

Ukraine.

"The tragedy of Babyn Yar, which happened in Ukraine 80 years ago, must never happen again," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "Neither in Ukraine nor in other parts of Europe. Nowhere in the world."

Source: "Controversy accompanies Ukraine's 80th anniversary of Babyn Yar genocidal murders; Rival museum project by Russian oligarchs called Kremlin 'Trojan Horse,'" by Mark Raczkiewycz, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, October 3, 2021.



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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

front lines in eastern Ukraine, the military administration said a civilian was killed on September 15 as the result of Russian shelling. Russian forces have crept closer to taking the city with a brutal offensive in recent days. Mr. Zelenskyy has said Russia had fired roughly 30 missiles, more than 800 guided bombs and nearly 300 attack drones at Ukraine in the past week. Russia's Defense Ministry said on September 15 that its air defenses had destroyed 29 Ukrainian drones overnight that were targeting seven regions of Russia, more than half of them over the Bryansk region. Calls have also mounted among some NATO members for the alliance to do more to ward off Russian missiles and attack drones like those that members Romania and Latvia say have recently violated their airspace amid the ongoing invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine is not part of NATO but the alliance said in July that the post-Soviet country was on an "irreversible path" to membership. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service, with reporting by dpa and Reuters)

Medvedev threatens Ukraine with nuke strike

Russian officials have threatened that a possible decision by the West to allow Kyiv to use donated weapons to strike deeper into Russian territory would result in a

major escalation of its war against Ukraine that could include the use of nuclear weapons. Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, now deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, warned on September 14 that Kyiv could be turned into a "gray melted spot" if restrictions against Ukraine's use of Western weapons were loosened. Kyiv has repeatedly said it needs to be able to conduct longer-range strikes into Russian territory to defend itself against invading Russian forces. The idea has gained traction in recent weeks as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made his case, with some European leaders taking up the argument for giving Ukraine longer-range capabilities and Britain reportedly nearing a decision to let Ukraine use its Storm Shadow missiles against Russian territory. U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer were expected on September 13 to discuss the issue during their talks in Washington. However, the White House made no mention of the topic in its statement following Mr. Biden's meeting with Mr. Starmer. The statement said only that the two leaders had discussed a range of issues and "reaffirmed their unwavering support for Ukraine as it continues to defend against Russia's aggression." In an apparent reference to the meeting, Mr. Medvedev wrote on September 14 that "the Anglo-Saxon imbeciles" do not want to admit that there is an end to Russia's "patience" and that

experts who have suggested Russia could resort to using nuclear weapons against Ukraine would be proven correct if that patience is exhausted. "What do Western leaders and their political establishments, playing at war, think our country's reaction to probable missile strikes 'deep into the territory [of Russia]' would be?" wrote Mr. Medvedev, who has frequently used his position to voice threats against Kyiv and the West since Russia's unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Mr. Medvedev said a nuclear conflict is a "very bad story with a very difficult outcome," claiming that is why Russia has not decided to use "nonstrategic or strategic" nukes to this point. However, he said, if it came to that, there would be a "giant gray melted spot" on the site of Kyiv, which he called the "mother city of Russia." Such rhetoric has increased from Moscow as Mr. Zelenskyy has increasingly lobbied for greater strike capabilities against Russian territory. Russian President Vladimir Putin on September 12 said that any change in policy that would allow Western weapons to be used for long-range strikes would mean the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance would be "at war" with Russia. "If that's the case, then taking into account the change of nature of the conflict, we will make the appropriate decisions based on the threats that we will face," Putin said. In June, Putin threatened to send long-range weapons – in what he called an "asymmetrical" response – to areas of the world in a position to strike countries supplying weapons to Ukraine.

Russia has also said it is amending its doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons, with Russian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Sergei Ryabkov saying on September 1 that the move was "connected with the escalation course of our Western adversaries." On September 14, Mr. Ryabkov claimed the decision to grant Ukraine permission to conduct long-range strikes against Russia had already been made by the West, and that Moscow is "ready for everything" and would "respond to the fullest." On September 14, State Duma deputy Andrei Kolesnik suggested Russia detonate a nuclear weapon on its own territory to remind the West of the threat posed by Russia's nuclear arsenal. "We shouldn't relax. We need to carry out a nuclear explosion somewhere, at some testing ground," Mr. Kolesnik was quoted as saying in an interview with the online newspaper Lenta.ru. "Nuclear tests are currently banned here, but maybe people should see what all this actually leads to." Mr. Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, wrote in response to the comments coming out of Moscow that "the loud horror stories of Putin's regime only testify to his fear that his terror may come to an end." "Strong decisions are needed," Mr. Yermak wrote on Telegram on September 14. "Terror can be stopped by destroying the military facilities from which it originates." Permission to conduct longer-range strikes, he said, "would speed up the solution" and would not allow "Russian terror" to "spread to other countries of the world."

(Continued on page 15)

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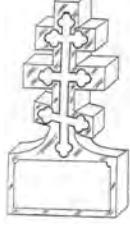
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Leaked records...

(Continued from page 1)

The leaked records, some of which were made public this month as part of a U.S. indictment, were first obtained by the German outlets Sueddeutsche Zeitung, NDR and WDR, which then shared the documents with Schemes and several other news organizations. They were leaked by an anonymous source who told reporters that the Social Design Agency had been hacked.

The Social Design Agency is led by Ilya Gambashidze, who was hit with U.S. sanctions along with the company and its associates in March over the company's influence operation, dubbed Doppelganger.

Mr. Gambashidze did not respond to requests for comment in time for publication.

U.S. authorities, who seized 32 internet domains linked to Doppelganger earlier this month, said the effort was overseen by Sergei Kiriyenko, a top Kremlin official and confidant of President Vladimir Putin.

In a video presentation included among the leaked records, Mr. Gambashidze addresses the camera wearing a hoodie emblazoned with patches reading "Russian ideological troops" and "commander of special forces."

According to the video presentation, Mr. Gambashidze's team produced 39,899 pieces of content from January to April of this year, including more than 30,000 "posts," more than 4,600 videos and video memes, and some 1,500 articles.

These include a fake story made to look as if it had been published by the German newspaper Bild claiming that Ukrainian refugees in Germany, while trying to burn a Russian flag, had set fire to the home of Germans who had given them shelter.

The influence operation, Schemes found, also produced falsified Ukrainian government documents, including a forged order purportedly issued by the country's top military commander, Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskiy, equating surrender by Ukrainian military personnel to treason.

The stated purpose of the forgery, according to the leaked records, was to "discredit the military-political leadership of Ukraine and demoralize the armed forces."

The influence operation also targeted Europe's political landscape, including the June European Parliament elections, with the goal of helping right-wing forces that would promote pro-Russian narratives, the leaked records show.

One document suggests "conducting a complex counter-campaign against the liberal globalists, their platform and prominent representatives," including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, with a primary focus on Germany, France, Spain, Italy and Poland.

The plan included efforts to paint "liberals and globalists" as warmongers, including about a possible Russian attack on the European Union; to portray support for LGBT rights as detrimental to children's mental health; to stoke discontent over high inflation and unemployment; and to accuse "E.U. globalists" of trying to transform Europe into a "totalitarian military camp ... like Ukraine."

The records also show the influence operation sought to boost the electoral fortunes of Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany party and France's right-wing National Rally.

One stated goal was to make more than half of German citizens "unwilling to sacrifice their well-being for the sake of defeating Russia" and promote the narrative that the United States is using Germany in an economic and hybrid war against Russia.

The operation also bombarded Ukrainian state institutions and media with comments via an online bot network that produced nearly 34 million comments from January to April, according to one internal document.

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 14)

(RFE/RL's Russian Service)

Usyk briefly detained in Poland

Ukraine's unified heavyweight world boxing champion, Oleksandr Usyk, has been released at the Krakow airport in Poland after being detained late on September 17, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Telegram. A video appeared on social media showing Mr. Usyk in handcuffs at the airport. It remains unclear why the world champion was detained. He described on Instagram his brief detention as "a misunderstanding that was quickly resolved." The World Boxing Council, World Boxing Organization and World Boxing Association champion, who also won gold at the 2012 London Olympics, is considered a national hero in Ukraine. Mr. Usyk has publicly supported Ukraine's efforts to stand against Russia's ongoing attack of his homeland. (RFE/RL's North.Realities)

Ukraine invites...

(Continued from page 5)

force said it shot down 53 of 56 Russian drones it detected overnight that were targeting a handful of regions and said the "main direction" of a "massive" overnight bombardment was Kyiv, which was the eighth attack on the capital this month.

Kyiv's regional military administration head, Ruslan Kravchenko, said one woman was hospitalized after being injured by fragments of a downed drone.

City military administration chief Serhiy Popko said that Kyiv had been under attack for more than three hours overnight as air defenses shot down "almost two dozen enemy UAVs ... around the capital."

Farther east, Ukrainian officials said the body of a woman was found under rubble late on September 15 at the scene of a Russian air strike on the northeastern city of Kharkiv.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said before dawn on September 16 that rescue operations were ongoing at the scene in Kharkiv of the bombardment by at least four missiles or other explosives, which struck a multistory residential building.

He said the latest information suggested 35 people were injured, including three children.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov has said that 42 people were injured.

Ukraine's General Staff also said Russian forces were continuing their offensive operations in eastern Ukraine, pointing to the area around Kurakhove in the Donbas region and around Pokrovsk, which has been under assault for the past several weeks.

"There have been more than a hundred battles since the beginning of the day. Most of them are in the Kurakhove direction, Pokrovsk," it said.

In Russia, officials said eight residents of the southern Belgorod region that borders Ukraine were injured by shelling and drone attacks by Ukrainian forces.

Belgorod regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov also said that a gas pipeline was damaged during the shelling, which he said affected at least 10 settlements over a period of 24 hours.

RFE/RL cannot independently corroborate claims of battlefield developments by either side in areas of the heaviest fighting.

Russia has bombarded Ukraine with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), rockets and various kinds of missiles for much of the 31-month-old full-scale invasion.

Many of the most recent attacks have targeted power and other infrastructure, but bombs have frequently also struck hos-

Opposition activist killed in St. Petersburg

Noted Russian opposition activist Vitaly Ioffe was killed in the northwestern city of St. Petersburg, a relative told RFE/RL on September 17. Russian media also reported about Mr. Ioffe's killing, citing his daughter and other sources. The Mash Telegram channel, which is close to the Kremlin, reported that a 20-year-old St. Petersburg resident was detained after he turned himself in to police in the nearby city of Vyborg and confessed to the killing. Officials have not commented on a possible motive. Mr. Ioffe was known for his criticism of the Russian government. He openly condemned Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine launched in February 2022. (RFE/RL's North.Realities)

Russian man arrested for illegal exporting

Investigators in the United States have arrested a 44-year-old Russian national in Sarasota, Fla., on an indictment charging him with conspiring to violate the Export Control Reform Act, to commit smuggling, to commit money laundering and to

pitals, schools and residential buildings, despite Moscow's assertion that it is not targeting civilians.

The U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said on September 15 that Russia is seeking "to achieve a decisive victory in Ukraine by 2026 before likely medium- to long-term economic and force generation constraints begin to significantly degrade Russia's ability to sustain its war effort in Ukraine."

It also said that, amid "growing challenges" in production and procurement of military equipment and munitions, "the Kremlin will likely become increasingly reliant on foreign partners to meet its materiel needs."

Mr. Zelenskyy recently urged the United States and other allies to "promptly implement" agreements on weapons and other supplies to help fight the invasion, underscoring Western debates on the extent and current restrictions on military aid to Kyiv.

Mr. Zelenskyy told CNN that he expects to present U.S. President Joe Biden with a four-point plan to win the war when he meets with him later this month.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on September 10 expressed hope for a second major peace summit to build on a similar gathering in Switzerland three months ago aimed at ending the war.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's allies are seemingly growing more receptive to loosening restrictions on the use of long-range weapons to allow Kyiv to hit targets deep inside Russia.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which Ukraine is not a member, is also facing growing calls to do more to fend off Russian missiles and drone strikes, some of which have violated NATO members' airspace.

Jens Stoltenberg, the outgoing NATO chief, on September 16 said that any decisions on the use of such weapons are "for individual allies to make."

"Allies have different policies on this," he told London radio.

Asked about threats by Putin of retaliation, the NATO chief said there were "no risk-free options in the war."

"But I continue to believe that the biggest risk for us, for the United Kingdom, for NATO, will be if President Putin wins in Ukraine," he added.

(With reporting by Reuters and AP)

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defraud the United States, the Justice Department said on September 16. Denis Postovoi is suspected of illegally exporting from the United States to Russia microelectronic components with military applications via other countries starting in February 2022, right after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The United States and other Western nations imposed sanctions on Russia over the invasion of its neighbor. (RFE/RL's Russian Service)

Traitor becomes member of Russian Duma

The governor of Russia's Astrakhan region, Igor Babushkin, appointed former

Ukrainian lawmaker Andrei Derkach, who is wanted in Ukraine on treason and corruption charges, to the Russian parliament's upper chamber last week, media reports said on September 16. The 57-year-old Derkach, who served as a Ukrainian lawmaker for almost 25 years, fled his country shortly after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Last year, his Ukrainian citizenship was suspended. Mr. Derkach is the son of the former chief of the Security Service of Ukraine, Leonid Derkach, who died at the age of 82 in January 2022. (RFE/RL's Crimea.Realities)

Yuriy Myron Bihun

1952-2024

 It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Yuriy Myron Bihun, who died after a long illness, on Saturday, August 31, 2024, at the age of 72. Yuriy was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend who touched the lives of many with his wealth of knowledge, acerbic wit and the passion he had for forestry and the natural world.

Born on March 12, 1952, in Irvington, N.J., to Yaroslav and Nadia (Kredensker) Bihun, Yuriy was raised in a strong Ukrainian family and community. These roots guided him throughout his life, both in his personal and professional endeavors. Yuriy was a man of many talents and languages, known for his sharp intellect and deep love for learning. Yuriy graduated Lafayette College with honors in 1974, studying European history. He went on to pursue his lifelong interest in forestry, earning a degree in forest management from Oregon State University and a master of science in forest genetics from the University of Maine.

This knowledge of forestry, along with his curiosity of the world, took him around the globe in a professional capacity. He worked to establish seedling nurseries in Haiti, protected tropical hardwoods in Latin America, identified timber blights in Lebanon and cruised the unspoiled timberlands of the Carpathian Mountains of Ukraine. Despite his love for world travel, he always considered Vermont his home base, having moved here in 1984 to manage commercial woodlots in the Northeast Kingdom.

As a forest resource analyst, Yuriy had great expertise working with the sustainable management of forest ecosystems and the restoration of natural landscapes. In 1991, he initiated the foundation of the Penn State Center for Ukrainian Agriculture, serving on its advisory board from 1992 to 1996. From 2003 to 2004, he was a senior Fulbright scholar at the Ukrainian National Forestry University in Ukraine. He was invited to return to Ukraine as a senior Fulbright specialist in fall 2006. That same year, Yuriy became program adviser at Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences, focusing on bilateral exchange, training and research programs with government organizations and institutions of higher learning in agriculture and natural resources in Ukraine. For many years, he continued to serve as a mentor for Ukrainian scholars as they pursued their studies in the U.S.

Over the course of his career, Yuriy had been a consultant and adviser to many causes close to his heart, chief among them the American Chestnut Foundation. He spent seven successful years as the Vermont/New Hampshire chapter president. In his time there, he worked tirelessly toward the audacious and hopeful goal of restoring the American chestnut.

The great outdoors was Yuriy's sanctuary. He was a passionate backpacker and hiker, exploring the forests and mountains of the Pacific Northwest before immersing himself in the beauty of the Green Mountains. In the winters he was an avid backcountry skier, with many of his companions struggling to keep up with him. When Yuriy wasn't on the trail, he could be found on the squash court, besting opponents half his age.

Beyond his active lifestyle, Yuriy had a deep appreciation for the arts and music, particularly jazz. He was not only a devoted listener but also a volunteer coordinator for Burlington's Discover Jazz Festival for many years. Yuriy's involvement in the jazz community reflected his commitment to fostering culture and bringing people together through music.

Yuriy was supported throughout his life by his wife of 46 years, Irene. She provided him extensive, tender care throughout his prolonged illness. He is survived by his loving wife; son, Nicholas, and wife Michelle; daughter, Ulana, and husband Jake; grandson, Theodor; sister, Renata, and brother-in-law, Richard; and a host of extended family and friends who will miss him dearly.

An Eastern Rite Ukrainian Catholic Liturgy was celebrated on September 6, 2024, at St. Thomas Church in Underhill Center, VT, followed by a celebration of Yuriy's life. The Bihun Family would like to thank Father Yaroslav Kostyk for traveling to Vermont to perform the burial services.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the American Chestnut Foundation charity or the New Century Fund for Ukraine; Attn: Deanna Behring; 201 Agricultural Administration Building; University Park, PA 16802 (Include in memory of Yuriy Bihun.)

Ukrainian Paralympians maintain excellence in swimming

by Ihor N. Stelmach

After the swimming competition at the 2024 Paralympics in Paris, the country second in the medal standings completely astounded the Games. It was not the United States or a traditional European power like Great Britain or Italy. The country with the second most medal victories, behind China, was Ukraine, a country that has for the last two and a half years fought a war against invading Russian forces. A long-time power in Paralympic swimming, Ukraine somehow managed to sustain its excellence in the sport despite the enormous challenges befalling the nation.

Men's S7 100-meter backstroke gold medalist Yurii Shenhur said, "All I can say is that everyone on the Ukrainian team is working with all they have got. Maybe that's the key. I am really thankful for the last couple of years that we got a place where we can train because the war, it's hard."

Ukraine finished the swimming events with 40 medals, ahead of Italy's 37, Great Britain's 32 and 30 won by the United States. Ukraine's eight gold medals put them fifth.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has exacted a toll on sports, just as it has in every other facet of Ukrainian life. Reports indicate that some 500 Ukrainian athletes have perished in the fighting from among the more than 3,000 athletes who have served in the Armed Forces. That number includes civilian athletes killed in airstrikes or other attacks.

Many additional athletes are returning from the frontlines with injuries or disabilities. Those fortunate enough to be spared from military duty instead represent their nation in international sporting competi-



Paralympian swimmers, gold-medalist Oleksandr Komarov and silver-medalist Iryna Poida, represented Ukraine at the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris.

tions, but they have been beset by their own challenges. These include financial shortfalls, resource shortages, damage to training facilities and relocation from their homes and training centers, to name a few.

Yet just like the Ukrainian people and their soldiers on the frontlines, Ukraine's Para swimmers persevered.

Oleksandr Komarov was not able to train in Ukraine. He described his horrible experiences in his home town of Mariupol. But three medal wins, including a gold in the S5 100-meter freestyle and two bronzes, made it all worthwhile. Komarov was in Mariupol when Russia bombed the city. He trained without his coach, only able to speak with him on the phone. It was a difficult situation, but he left Paris with great results and hope for a better tomorrow.

Ukraine's Para swimmers have proven their prowess in the sport previously with 43 medals (14 gold) in Tokyo 2021, placing fourth in gold medals and third in total swimming medals, ahead of Italy and the U.S. In 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, Ukraine was second behind only China with 74 total medals in swimming and 25 gold.

Individually, Andrii Trusov won five medals including two gold, while Danylo Chufarov captured four medals (two silver, two bronze). Yaroslav Denysenko and the aforementioned Komarov each won three medals. Anna Stetsenko led the Ukrainian women with four medals (one gold) while Anna Hontar and Iryna Poida each claimed three medals.

Denysenko experienced some personal hardship while in Paris as his hometown

of Poltava was the site of a brutal Russian airstrike that killed 55 people.

He candidly admitted that the Poltava tragedy was "in the back of my mind" and it was difficult for him to sleep. He concentrated on making sure he gave 100 percent effort in his events, even though it was hard to temporarily stop thinking about the casualties in his hometown.

Many Ukrainian swimmers were displaced, some going abroad, like Komarov, who trained and is living with his family in Austria. Chufarov, from Mariupol, has not been home since the start of the war.

Unlike the Olympics, Ukrainian Paralympians were forced to share podiums with Russians, as Komarov did with Kirill Pulver after winning the S5 100-meter freestyle race.

The Ukrainian Para athletes were swimming for something greater than themselves and it seemed to drive them to succeed. Winning medals meant more because of the challenges in training and preparing for the Games. The constant stress and anxiety of worrying about the well-being of family members and friends back home while hearing about attacks and bombings only added to the difficulty of competing at an elite level.

Perhaps gold medalist Trusov said it best.

"It's a fantastic feeling because it was the hardest medal for me and the medal I wished for the most," he said.

Other Ukrainian Paralympians noted the country's fighting spirit, both on the battlefield and in sporting competition.

"We are Ukrainians, we are strong in spirit. We need to do our jobs and keep fighting," Denysenko said.

(Based on reporting by Swimming World.)

War and the Olympics as seen by Ukrainian judoka

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Elizabeth Shevchenko (also spelled Chevtchenko) was in Paris at the women's judo event on July 30 to watch Ukrainian judokas compete, hoping to pick up a few pointers. The slender, frail-looking 19-year-old was dressed in a blue t-shirt with yellow piping and was specifically watching the 57-kilogram competition at the Champ-de-Mars judo arena. Showing little or no emotion, she looked as if something inside of her was broken or unable to come out. The young lady has already experienced so much in the past few years.

She arrived in Paris on July 29, having left her home town of Chernihiv, Ukraine, two days earlier. She first traveled to Kyiv, hopped on a bus to Warsaw, then made her way to Berlin before finally arriving in Paris. In her mind, it was all worth the two days of bus rides that it took to reach her dream. She pulled out her phone and filmed athletes making their way onto the tatami.

Two years ago, Shevchenko was going through hell on earth.

On February 24, 2022, the day that Russia invaded Ukraine, Shevchenko was in route to her morning training session at the judo club in Chernihiv. The city was soon overrun by invading Russian soldiers, effectively stopping traffic from all directions. She and her family escaped to the nearby village of Ligadnie where Shevchenko's grandparents live. But on March 3, Russia's 55th Mountain Motorized Rifle Brigade entered the village.

The Russian soldiers raided every house, automatically shooting any Ukrainian men wearing khaki-colored clothing, even if it was a hunting jacket. Her uncle was shot dead right in front of her and her father was taken away. Sitting in the stands at the judo event, Shevchenko has not heard anything about her father since that frightful day in March.

Shevchenko watched as Ukrainian Daria Bilodid took her turn in the competition, a double world champion and bronze medalist at the Tokyo Games in the 48-kilogram class. Bilodid easily qualified in the preliminaries, but she came up against Japan's Aruka Funakubo in the quarterfinal.

After witnessing the death of her uncle and her father's disappearance, then 17-year-old Shevchenko was taken along with all of the village's residents into the cellar of the local school. Some 300 people including 60 children were held captive there. They took turns sleeping, going to a makeshift restroom and breathing, trying not to suffocate in cramped quarters. Upstairs in the building, Russian soldiers drank heavily and occasionally went downstairs to where Shevchenko said a soldier would pull the pin out of a grenade and hand it to a child.

Many days and nights of horror passed by at a snail's pace. Dead bodies piled up in a corner of one cellar. Shevchenko, being an elite-level athlete, was prepared to endure and survive more of the unspeakable than the average Ukrainian. She would remain in that cellar until the

Ukrainian Armed Forces retook the village. Seven people were killed while she was there. In time, she returned to her club and resumed her training. Her focus on judo let her think about her sport and not about her father and the ongoing war. Two months later, Shevchenko won the Ukrainian Junior Championship.

Meanwhile, Bilodid and Funakubo went at it in a heated battle that went into sudden-death overtime. Bilodid showed signs of fatigue, lacking her usual stamina and physical strength, her decision to move up one weight class was perhaps a factor. She received a final penalty resulting in her elimination. Bilodid walked out of the ring before running out of the Champ-de-Mars arena and was heard screaming in the distance.

Attending an Olympics was always Shevchenko's dream. And, having gotten a taste of the atmosphere surrounding the Games in Paris, she said she felt extra motivation to train harder in the hope of qualifying for the 2028 Los Angeles Games. She would see a weeping Bilodid pass by and collapse in despair on the sidewalk, vividly demonstrating the deep psychological side of an Olympic athlete's disappointment in losing an important sports competition.

Having seen the Olympic Games, Shevchenko knows what's ahead of her and why her training will be extremely intense for the next four years.

Later that evening, she accepted an invitation from Ukraine's Volya Space to meet up with boxer Oleksandr Usyk. The



International Judo Federation/ijf.org

Olympic hopeful Yelyzaveta Shevchenko (57 kilograms), 19, is an international judo competitor who represents Ukraine.

next morning, she visited a local sports store and greeted Ukraine's national judo coach at the Olympic Village before boarding her bus for two more days of travel.

She got back to Chernihiv on August 1, and she planned on resuming her training immediately. On vacation from school, Shevchenko said that has no time off from judo training except for Sundays. She will re-focus on her ultimate goal of competing as a judoka representing Ukraine four years from now. She said that nothing will stand in her way, including the sound of bombs exploding in the distance.

(Based on reporting by The Week.)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihorgenia@sbcglobal.net.

Ukrainian pro sports update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ukraine's senior sumo wrestlers take first place

Ukrainian sumo wrestlers won a total of 17 medals at the 2024 Sumo World Championships in Krotoszyn, Poland, on September 7-8. The senior team won first place with a total of 11 medals (five gold, four silver, two bronze), while the junior team came in third place with six medals (three silver, three bronze), according to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. Senior gold medalists included Demid Karachenko (85 kilograms), Yehor Krupsky (100 kilograms), Ivanna Berezovska (over-80 kilograms), Iryna Pasichnyk (open), Yelyzaveta Morenko, Iryna Pasichnyk and Ivanna Berezovska (team).

Ukrainian U-20 wrestlers win 4 medals

Ukrainian wrestlers won four medals at the 2024 U-20 World Wrestling Championships held in Ponte Vedra, Spain, on September 2-8, according to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. Yehor Yakushenko won gold in the Greco-Roman over-97 kilogram category and Iryna Bondar captured gold in the women's 62 kilogram class. Maria Orlevych won silver in the 76 kilogram category and Aida Korimova tied for bronze in the 50 kilogram class.

Ukraine wins medals at U-19 Badminton Open

Ukraine won four medals at the Adamietz Polish U-19 Open in Strzelce Opole, Poland, on September 6-8, according to the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. The badminton competition was attended by 172 athletes representing 17 countries.

Ukrainian medalists included Anastasia Alymova (gold medal in singles), Alymova and Raya Almalalha (silver medal in doubles), Vladislav Kunin and Yaroslava Vantsarovskaya (silver in mixed doubles) and Oleksandra Botsman and Victoria Polychuk (bronze in doubles).

Ukraine Paralympians to receive \$8 million-plus in prizes

Ukraine's Ministry of Youth and Sports will pay Ukrainian Paralympic athletes \$8,095 million for medals won at the 2024 Games, according to a report by UNN via Suspilne. Swimmer Andrii Trusov will receive \$550,000 for his two gold and three silver medals. Swimmers Anna Stesenko and Denys Ostapchenko will each receive \$340,000. Athletes from the 11 sports who won medals at the 2024 Paralympic Games will receive prize money.



www.instagram.com/sander.sahaydak

Sander Sahaydak, who is of Ukrainian descent, is a placekicker for Pennsylvania State University.

The money for these awards is allocated from the state budget to the Ministry of Youth and Sports as bonuses for achievements at the Paris Games. The payout for Paralympic athletes is identical to that of the Olympics: \$125,000 for gold, \$80,000 for silver and \$55,000 for a bronze medal.

Injuries end Svitolina's season

Elina Svitolina ended her 2024 tennis season because of injuries impacting her

play in the past year since returning from maternity leave. After reaching the Auckland final at the start of this year she temporarily made her way back to the Top 20 in the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) rankings only to experience a mixed season with a back injury hindering the 30-year-old Ukrainian star.

On September 11, Svitolina told

(Continued on page 18)

Ukrainian pro sports update: soccer

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ukraine's Under-21 football team remains undefeated

Ukraine's Under-21 national football team defeated Northern Ireland 2-1 in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, on September 10 to go a perfect 8-0 in Euro 2025 qualifying play. The win guarantees Ukraine at least a spot in the playoffs as a top-three second-place group finisher, but in all likelihood it grants them a spot in the 2025 tournament based on their 24 points atop Group F and the five-point lead they currently have over second-place England.

Midfielder Oleh Orcheretko set up Nazar Voloshyn in the 10th minute and Maksym Braharu scored what proved to be the winner some 20 minutes later. Ukrainian goalkeeper Ruslan Neshcheret allowed only one goal in the 81st minute on a penalty shot after Ukraine captain Arsenii Batakov was ejected for hauling down Charlie Allen inside the penalty area,

Ukraine's final two qualifying matches

against England and Serbia are scheduled for mid-October.

Albania tops Ukraine 2-1 in UEFA Nations League

In the opening match of the 2024-2025 UEFA Nations League, Ukraine lost to Albania by a score of 2-1. Ukraine opened the scoring in the 49th minute on a goal by Yukhym Konoplya. But the lead was short-lived when a mere five minutes later Albania responded with a tally by Blerim Ismaili in the 54th minute that evened the match. Arben Asani then gave "the Reds" the advantage in the 66th minute and his goal proved to be the difference in the game played in Wren, Austria, on September 7.

Striker Artem Dovbyk did not suit up for Team Ukraine and was not expected to play in their second Nations League match

against the Czech Republic on September 10. Dovbyk suffered an injury while playing for Roma in the Italian League's Serie A.

Czech Republic defeats Ukraine 3-2

It was a second straight defeat in Nations League action for Ukraine on September 10 when the Czech Republic held on to win 3-2 in Prague. Two first-half goals by Pavel Sulc guided the home club with a late penalty ensuring the win in a match where both sides created many scoring opportunities.

The Czechs struck first when Sulc redirected a Vaclav Cerny shot past Ukraine goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin. Ukraine equalized in the 37th minute when Vladyslav Vanat headed home a Mykola Shaparenko cross from the left flank. Sulc tallied his second for the Czechs right before halftime. Captain Tomas Soucek extended the lead with an 80th minute penalty shot before Heorhiy Sudakov got Ukraine back within a goal.

Ukraine next faces Georgia in October in Nations League action.

Lunin re-signs with Real Madrid

Real Madrid announced on September 11 that the team reached an agreement with goalkeeper Andriy Lunin on a new contract through June 2028. The Ukrainian impressed with the club last season in the absence of injured starter Thibaut Courtois, stepping up to help the Spanish powerhouse win both La Liga and the UEFA Champions League.

Lunin was the hero in Real Madrid's quarterfinal victory over Manchester City when Los Blancos advanced to the next round by way of a penalty shootout.

The Ukrainian goalie attracted the interest of several clubs during the summer transfer window based on his play in 2023-2024. His contract was set to expire in

2025. Chelsea was particularly interested in Lunin's services with the London club pursuing a new goalkeeper.

Having changed player agents in April, it was reported that both his new agency and the player were eager to leave Real Madrid. This did not come to pass as Lunin decided to stay put and re-sign with his current club, where he will remain a backup to Courtois.

The 25-year-old's contract renewal does not preclude his leaving during future contract windows. Real Madrid has valued Lunin at 25 million euros (\$27,540,000).

Chelsea considering parting ways with Mudryk

It is no secret that Mykhailo Mudryk has not lived up to expectations at Chelsea since being acquired from Shakhtar Donetsk for over \$116 million. As per a report by Give Me Sport, Chelsea is thinking about selling the 24-year-old Ukrainian's services in the upcoming January transfer window if his performance does not improve by the end of the year.

Mudryk's name has not been linked to any club so far since arriving at Chelsea, and he has a disappointing five goals in 48 English Premier League appearances. Chelsea originally beat out Arsenal to obtain Mudryk and it is unknown if the North London club is still interested in the speedy winger.

The January transfer market may only see loan offers for Mudryk, but if his production does not improve, Chelsea may have to consider any offers. He certainly has the physical and technical skills to do well in the Premier League, but has encountered difficulties in adapting to his new club.

(Based on reporting by Irish Football Association, UNN, Reuters, caught offside and The Hard Tackle.)



Ukrainian Association of Football

Ihor Krasnopir (No. 9), who plays forward for Ukraine's U-21 team, dribbles past Northern Ireland defenders on September 10 in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, where Ukraine won the match 2-1 and remained undefeated in the tournament.

BOOK NOTES

Celebrated chef releases Ukrainian cookbook

The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen: Recipes from a Native Chef, by Yevhen Klopotenko, New York: Voracious/Little, Brown and Company, 2024. \$40 (hardcover) ISBN: 9780316559393

As Ukraine defends its cultural identity and heritage, Ukrainian cuisine is also being usurped by Russia. On that front, chef Yevhen Klopotenko's cookbook, "The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen: Recipes from a Native Chef," focuses on Ukrainian culinary offerings and highlights the independent customs and traditions that best express the spirit of the Ukrainian people.



https://x.com/klopotenko_chef

A graduate of Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, as well as the Kyiv University of Economics and Law, chef Yevhen Klopotenko won MasterChef Ukraine in 2015 and was named to the "50 Next" list of rising global culinary talent.

The book is described as Mr. Klopotenko's "love letter to the diverse culture and foodways of Ukraine – and a reclamation of the rich culinary cuisine as they were intended before Soviet influence and collectivization changed the trajectory of the cuisine throughout the 20th century."

Food and Wine, which lauded the cookbook, wrote the following: "With one of the country's most beloved chefs as your guide, let this book introduce you to the comforting, flavorful dishes of Ukraine's regional cooking."

The included recipes are the result of years of research into regional Ukrainian cooking, resulting in an exhilarating trip through Ukraine's history. It peels back layers of propaganda to identify true native cuisine shaped by tradition, geography and agriculture. Offerings include breads, dips, appetizers, soups, salads, main dishes such as roasts and familiar favorites, desserts, beverages. The recipes incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables, and the book provides examples of regional recipes from Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Crimea as well as the Carpathian Mountains.

Photography by Dima Bahta and Vladyslav Nahornyi is featured in the cookbook. Those images capture the vibrancy and the simplicity of the recipes.

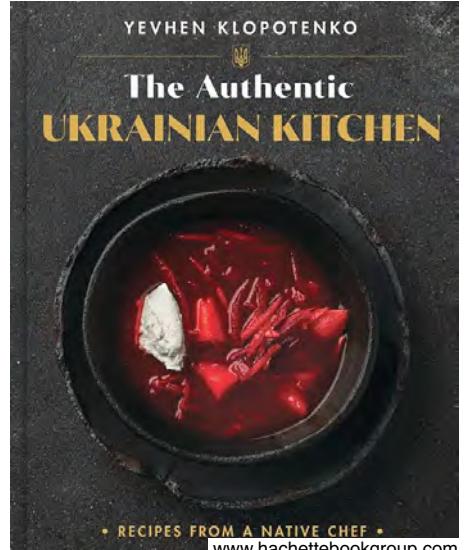
Mr. Klopotenko is an internationally celebrated chef who is active as a cultural ambassador advocating in various spheres. He won Master Chef Ukraine in 2015 and hosted the Ukrainian program CookWars, raising awareness of healthy eating and

suggesting ways to improve nutrition programs in schools across Ukraine. Two of his restaurants in Ukraine are 100 Rokiv Tomu Vpered (Kyiv), a conceptual space that reimagines Ukrainian cuisine had there not been Soviet repression of Ukrainian identity, and Inshi Bistro (Lviv), which provides food to those who are unable to pay for their meals.

Prior to the launch of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine, Mr. Klopotenko campaigned for borshch to gain UNESCO recognition as an Intangible Cultural Heritage item. It was an attempt to safeguard the dish as a food item of distinctly Ukrainian origin. That campaign received global recognition.

Mr. Klopotenko is known for advocating for authentic Ukrainian cuisine around the world and for changing Ukrainian school catering to educate children about Ukrainian culinary traditions and the country's food heritage.

A graduate of Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, as well as the Kyiv University of Economics and Law, Mr. Klopotenko is the winner of MasterChef Ukraine and was named to the "50 Next" list of rising global culinary talent. He has gained experience working in the United States, the United Kingdom and other parts of Europe. Recently, his efforts have focused on humanitarian aid in Ukraine.



Ukrainian chef Yevhen Klopotenko's cookbook, "The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen: Recipes from a Native Chef," focuses on Ukrainian culinary offerings and highlights the independent customs and traditions that best express the spirit of the Ukrainian people.

The cookbook, "The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen: Recipes From a Native Chef," by Mr. Klopotenko is available at online book-sellers, as well as through the publisher, Voracious/Little, Brown and Company, <https://littlebrown.com> and <https://voraciousbooks.com>.

Ukrainian pro...

(Continued from page 17)

Ukrainian media that she would not be competing again until 2025 and, considering she was injured much of this season, she was happy with her No. 28 ranking. She admitted that she was not in peak condition for the 2024 Olympics or several of the Tour's events, including the U.S. Open.

This is the second consecutive year that Svitolina has ended her playing season early. In 2023, she cited fitness concerns as a reason for sitting out the remainder of the year.

The back injury that restricted her throughout the season led to issues with her hip and other parts of her lower body.

Motorsport racing returns to Ukraine

The Automobile Federation of Ukraine (FAU) has enacted new rules allowing organizers to hold motorsport events in the country provided they receive a referral from their discipline's FAU committee and approval from their local regional military administration.

The FAU was able to update its policies after successful kart races and hillclimbs took place in the spring and summer despite Ukraine being under martial law. The Ukrainian Karting Championship relaunched with the first round being held in Poltava, Ukraine. In addition, the Ukraine Forest Challenge Kyiv, Ukrainian Hillclimb Club and several local automobile clubs have hosted races to raise money and purchase equipment for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Martial law sidelined Ukrainian Motorsport action since it was imposed following Russia's unprovoked invasion in February 2022. On June 5, 2023, Ukraine's Ministry of Youth and Sports outlined additional security measures that would allow sporting events to take place under wartime conditions.

Sahaydak kicking for Nittany Lions
Pennsylvania State University kicker

Sander Sahaydak began the 2023 football season as the school's starting placekicker. After missing a pair of field goals in the first half of last year's opener against West Virginia, the Nittany Lions turned to another Ukrainian kicker, Alex Felkins (Ukrainian on his mother Inna's side), and he never gave up the job.

Felkins went on to score 104 points, making 19 of 24 field goal attempts and 47 out of 47 extra points in his senior season. He had a brief look with the Houston Texans as a mini-camp invitee and has hopes of becoming a kicker in the National Football League.

This spring the Ukrainian Sahaydak (on his father's side) competed with two others for the Penn State kicker's job which he won. In the team's 2024 season opener against West Virginia, Sahaydak again missed a field goal attempt, this one from 47 yards. He made all five extra point attempts in the team's 34-12 victory.

In Penn State's second game of the season, a 34-27 win over Bowling Green, Sahaydak redeemed himself with successful field goals of 43 and 28 yards to go with four extra points. The first player head coach James Franklin mentioned postgame was his kicker Sahaydak and how his perfect performance restored belief in his role as the team's placekicker.

The left-footed Sahaydak signed with Penn State as a scholarship specialist out of Bethlehem, Pa., in the Class of 2021. He was ranked by 247 Sports as a three-star prospect and the No. 1 kicker in his class. He has been praised for his leg strength, which was capably demonstrated with his 43-yard make against Bowling Green.

Sander earned Academic All-Big Ten honors in 2022 and 2023. His father, Alexander, played soccer at Brown University in 1990-1993. Sister Olivia played field hockey at Duke University (2018-2021), while uncle Timothy Sahaydak played professional soccer for the Miami Fusion (1999-2001) and Columbus Crew (1997-1998).

(Based on reporting by UNN, The Checkered Flag, tennis head Tennis World, SI Penn State and 247 Sports.)

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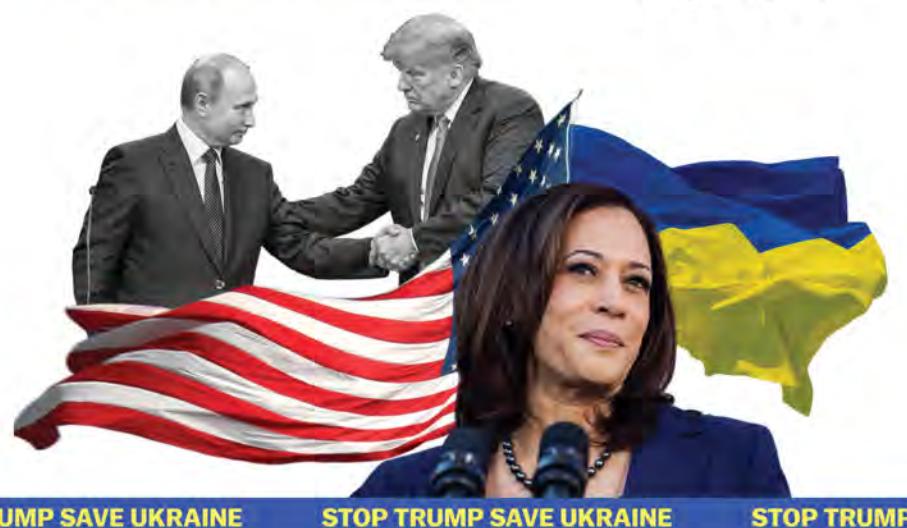
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We are concerned Ukrainian-Americans who oppose Trump and are organizing voters in Michigan and Pennsylvania. We are assisting Ukrainian-Americans with voter registration and practical needs, including transportation to polling stations, in these two crucial swing states.

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OUT & ABOUT

September 22 Olivebridge, NY	Ukrainian Community Day, Ashokan Center, events@ashokancenter.org or 845-657-8333	October 1 Winnipeg, MB	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, Burton Cummings Theater, www.ticketmaster.ca or www.bandura.org
September 22-25 Washington	Ukraine Action Summit, American Coalition for Ukraine, Capitol Hill, https://americancoalitionforukraine.org	October 2 Cambridge, MA	Presentation with Oleksandra Keudel, Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu
September 25 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Martin Schulze Wessel, "The Curse of Empire. Ukraine, Poland, and the Fallacy in Russian History," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu	October 3 Dickinson, ND	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, Dorothy Stickney Auditorium - May Hall, Dickinson State University, www.eventbrite.com or www.bandura.org
September 25 New York	Film screening, "Lessons of Tolerance" by Arkadii Neptaliuk, Columbia University, https://harriman.columbia.edu	October 4 Minneapolis, MN	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, Protez Foundation, Hopkins High School, www.eventbrite.com or www.bandura.org
September 26 New York	Presentation by Regina Smyth, "Conservative Values and Authoritarian Regime Stability: Russia on the Eve of War," Columbia University, https://harriman.columbia.edu	October 5 Skokie, IL	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, www.ticketmast.com or www.bandura.org
September 26-28 Ottawa	18th annual Danyliw Research Seminar on Contemporary Ukraine, University of Ottawa, www.danyliwseminar.com	October 5 Warrington, PA	Craft and Flea Market, St. Anne Ukrainian Catholic Church, 215-962-8103 or tscarpato81@yahoo.com
September 28 Calgary, AB	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, Grace Presbyterian Church, www.eventbrite.ca or www.bandura.org	October 5 Glen Spey, NY	Uktober Fest, St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Catholic Church, 845-858-4910 or StVolodymyrGS@yahoo.com
September 28 Whippany, NJ	Ukrainian Festival, St. John the Baptist Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ukrainian American Cultural Center of New Jersey, www.uaccnj.org	October 6 North Wales, PA	Ukrainian Fall Harvest festival, Ukrainian National Women's League, of America (Branch 128), Ukrainian American Sports Center Tryzub, www.tryzub.org
September 29 Chicago	Film screening, "Bucha," followed by discussion with producer Oleksandr Shchur, Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, www.uima-chicago.org	October 8 Storrs, CT	Concert, "With Ukraine in Our Hearts," featuring violinist Solomiya Ivakhiv, cellist Garrett Adkins and pianist Melvin Chen, University of Connecticut, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, 860-486-4226
September 29 Edmonton, AB	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, Francis Winspear Center for Music, www.winspearcentre.com or www.bandura.org		
September 30 Saskatoon, SK	Concert, Ukrainian Bandurist Chorus of North America, Broadway Theater, https://broadwaytheatre.ca or www.bandura.org		

Entries in "Out and About" are listed free of charge. Priority is given to events advertised in The Ukrainian Weekly. However, we also welcome submissions from all our readers. Items will be published at the discretion of the editors and as space allows. Please send e-mail to mdubas@ukrweekly.com.



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