#WARDIARY: HISTORY OF OPPRESSION

Posted on 8. März 2022 by Lina Zalitok

In ihrem #WarDiary reflektiert Lina Zalitok über ihren Alltag im Krieg, den sie in einem Dorf nahe Kyjiw verbringt.

In ihrem #WarDiary reflektiert die Literaturwissenschaftlerin und Übersetzerin Lina Zalitok über ihren Alltag im Krieg, den sie in einem Dorf nahe Kyjiw verbringt.

On the 11th day of war I finally feel like I can breathe fully without hardly bearable heaviness in my heart. It is my first night when I didn't have hallucinations (I must admit, I also had them during stressful periods in peaceful time) and didn't feel crawling panic which feels like a slow death (I never felt anything like this before). All the previous nights I had dreams that I was reading various Telegram and Facebook channels and chats where everybody started to panic and wrote that there was going to be bombing everywhere. From time to time I cried out in sleep to my parents who were also sleeping "Please lie down on the floor and cover yourselves", "Are you sure that we shouldn't go to a bomb shelter now?", "Are you sure the window glass won't hurt us if there is a shelling?", "Is our corridor the right place to hide, are the walls thick enough?"... After I woke up I felt guilty that I was spreading panic. Fortunately, my parents turned out to be more resilient and weren't even affected by my desperate cries.

During these hours it seemed to me that I felt the panic, fear and pain of every single Ukrainian, of all the Ukrainians altogether. It was worsened by the thought that this panic was our sure way to defeat and death. Then I would fall asleep in a different kind of sleep, without any feelings and later in the morning I would start to numb myself with gathering donations for the army, trying to formulate and share some important political messages on social media (if it helps?), checking on my friends in dangerous places, and so on.

All these days I am glued to my mobile phone and hardly put it aside. I continue to text and read while eating. I continue to text and read while my parents are talking to me so mostly I don't hear a word of what they are saying. They always have to repeat everything at least three times. And this constant background talking is making me nervous and irritated. Especially when I hear a

© Lina Zalitok, 2022. The picture was shot by the author on March 7th. In 2014 "Putin khuylo" (Putin is a dickhead) appeared on this wall, which was afterwards removed. Now you can see it again.

novinki

question "Did you get crazy?". I didn't want to lose time to explain what I was doing and was just getting angry. Now as I am trying to give myself a pause, it is getting better. I sometimes manage to do three sips of coffee without looking at my phone. And I can eat for 2 minutes without looking at my phone. I hear one sentence out of six sentences that my parents are saying to me.

The day before yesterday, I read that if you feel guilty being in security you should try to help your closest ones, then the territorial defence and then maybe try to spread some information on social media. For whatever reason I totally ignore my closest ones and fancy that if I ask European governments on social media to send us lethal weapons in order to save more lives, I will be heard and maybe they would send at least one more aircraft to stop at least one bombing. Feeling secure is a relative feeling though. My friend in Kyiv who is now in the part of the city where there is relatively little shelling, feels guilty for being "secure" as she is not in the place where the army is.

I don't feel guilty at all. I just try to do whatever I can and reach everybody I can reach. Ok, I feel a little bit guilty, because the place where I am, is still quiet. But I am so happy that this time I am in Ukraine. In contrast to 2013, when at the start of Maidan and the war in the East of Ukraine, I turned out to be in Berlin. I was just starting my master studies after I received a generous EU scholarship.

I still remember my unconfident hesitations and doubts if I should leave it all and go back to Ukraine and fight for its freedom. I seriously thought about going as a volunteer to Donetsk and Luhansk regions. My parents talked me out if it and I didn't have any friends or people who would explain me how to organise that, where I should go, etc. So I stayed in Berlin. Some six years altogether, with intermissions in Brussels and Strasbourg. And then I somehow unexpectedly turned out to stay in Ukraine and even built up some kind of settled life without planning to pack my bag and leave again for another country. Last time I wanted to leave was in June 2021. Afrer that I finally felt happy where I was as the discovery of Lindy hop dancing totally changed my perception of me and my life. But that's a different story.

Now I feel it was pretty crazy of the 23 years-old me to think of going to the front back then in 2014. I am not even thinking about it now as I know that I am totally unprepared for such mission, first of all physically unprepared. Fortunately, there is a lot of different kinds of fighting.

If you are foreigner and ask yourself where Ukrainians have their courage from, our history will give you the answers. I remember how fascinating it was to read at school about brave Cossacks who fought for Ukrainian independence from Poland and Russia in the 17th century and before, against Osman empire. I remember how I wondered reading my schoolbook of history, why the Russian empire hated Ukrainian language and culture in the 19th century so much, prohibited it with laws and prosecuted Ukrainian writers. I was sad reading how Stalin killed the best Ukrainian writers and culture activists in 1930s, the so called Executed Renaissance. I was crying as I heard the testimonies of people who survived the great famine Holodomor, also organised by Stalin.

I imagined how Ukrainians felt during the Second World War and after its end, as the people who were captives of Nazis were persecuted by Soviet Union as traitors. Finally, I had a clear picture of Kyiv being bombed before my eyes

in 2008 as during my first student year I read about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict because if island Tusla in 2001 and the statements of Russian politicians that Ukraine was not a state.

Our history is a history of oppression. 1991 we achieved the Independence of Ukraine. We fought hard for it. So be sure, we won't give it back.

von Lina Zalitok

Bildquelle: © Lina Zalitok, 2022. Bereits 2014 wurde auf den Zaun eines Marktplatzes nahe Kyjiws "Путін Хуйло" ("Putin ist ein Arschloch") geschrieben. Nachdem es in den letzten Jahren verschwand, ist es dieser Tage wieder deutlich zu erkennnen.