

**ARSEN AVAKOV**

**GREEN  
NOTEBOOK**

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## **AUTHOR'S PREFACE**

This is a collection of my articles, essays, publications in the press and FB posts from 2014 to the fall of 2017.

Sometimes these are abstract texts, sometimes reflections or emotions in response to the flow of events of that time...

Those were uneasy years from Euromaidan, victorious Revolution of Dignity through despair and powerlessness of the annexation of the Crimea, seizure of the part of the Donbas, war, grief and valour... Through the formation of emotions of the next period of the historical struggle for independence, national consciousness, through the hard daily work intended to launch global changes. And, which is the most important, it is the change of mentality.

Why this period? I think, it needless to explain: over those years there have been so many key turning points in the fate of our country that every day deserves to remain in memory and history.

Why these articles, posts and essays? For me, they are all connected with a common flow of events.

I neither colored the truth nor papered over the cracks; sometimes the feelings are too strong and style may be clumsy... Dates, people and destinies...

I have entitled this collection *The Green Notebook* by the name of one of my stories, which, I think, expresses the main message of this collection: **this is your life and your power to fill an empty vessel. To change the imperfect. To believe in the power of creation. So, for me, this is the only way not to become a grudge under uneasy tests with and not to turn into a tired person.**

You should find strength to follow your own road despite fatigue, disappointment, failure, and errors. You should not lose sight of your goal, see the main thing in the chaos of the day: let it be only small shoots of future victories. Do not be disappointed when not everything turns out. Do not stop. Remain the creator.

Each publication of this collection is premised with events chronicle of the day of issue; sometimes it brings out the background of the post, its mood, sometimes not, but it always allows the reader to build up her/his temporary reminiscences about this difficult time of ours... And besides, it seems to me, it will help to understand these texts more accurately and to feel what I wanted to say.

To understand and feel...

## CHRONICLE

*January 01, 2014*

*“Last midnight we said goodbye to the Old Year and welcomed the New one. We were physically close to each other, though we were spiritually far apart. We spoke simultaneously and did not listen to each other. We all did the same thing: we saw the New Year in, but spiritually we did not stay together.”*

*Liubomyr Huzar,  
Bishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church,  
Cardinal*



*Liubomyr Huzar*

## TO THOSE WHO KEEP AWAY...

*January 01, 2014, 23:45*

To those who keep away...

In the silence of the transition between years, you'd better decide for yourself: **to be a prisoner of the present, to complain about fate, to groan from discomfort and to suffer or to be the agent of a meaningful process of change.**

NOW everyone can make a choice. And it was not the issue of Maidan or of a specific protest. It was a matter of a crystallizing new social awareness where you could build in... or remain a neutral observer.

I'm not in a hurry to condemn or push anyone.

You should be honest with yourself in the first place.

And those who think and look at it from the side, and those, who are already acting, do not fully understand they are really participating, or only playing... **It is important really to be honest with yourself, understand and do what you should do!**

## CHRONICLE

*February 12, 2014*

→ The day before, in the Trade Unions' Center, a box of medical preparations delivered by unknown persons to Maidan activists blew up. One activist suffered a serious hand injury.

\*

→ The people's deputies handed the Prosecutor General of Ukraine Viktor Pshonka a list of the names of 124 journalists who had been injured during Euromaidan, demanding to hold MIA officers accountable. MIA Head Vitaliy Zakharchenko said that the journalists participated in protests and provocations, and therefore they had been injured.

## ABOUT BEAUTY AND HATRED...

*February 12, 2014, 23:12*

I often receive many in private messages on the same theme: complaints. This and that on Maidan went out of joints; one person was roughed up; it looks ugly... We go about it with all our souls; however, some things need fixing... you're supposed to be a normal person... you can not but notice this... do something...

I feel upset and absorbed in thought... I try and explain something, correct something... in general, I respond. At the time the process looks normal, probably...

But, you know, I still want to say to everyone who writes to me with good intentions —

My dear ones,

Maidan is neither a public exhibition, nor a beautiful picture of the protest and certainly not only a direct manifestation of oppositional ideas.

Maidan is a protest and pain. The revealed pain of the millions of people. The accumulated pain. The unbearable pain against which the whole organism rebels. The pain, to which we were accustomed, which we were forced to accept... However, we did not crouch down in fear.

And today we cry. We shout breaking from the shackles of this slavish pain. And while we're breaking out, it hurts us a hundred times more...

And you know what? **Pain is not beautiful. Pain is above force.** Get this straight.

It is over beauty and human dreams. It exists and I see it every day here on the Maidan.

**And I want the pain to be gone and our goal be reached... I want Maidan to change and pure power, spirit and beauty remain... And so it will be, I'm sure!**

In the meantime, it is not so! There are pain and war, emotions and faith through pain.

And do not tell me that you need to hide this pain bashfully retouching reality. That's the way we're made. We strive for light, strive for the best, and sometimes it hurts and it does not have to be beautiful...

\* \* \*

Night. We stand our watch on the Maidan.

Sotnyk on duty is calling me.

"We've bagged a man for carrying a pistol. We're taking him to you... what to do to decide?"

"OK. I'm waiting."

They brought the guy. A sickly guy, about 25, buzz cut, unkempt, looking rather tense. A shiner, his nose is bleeding. He wipes his face with his hands smearing blood on the cheekbones. His lips are trembling and he is about to burst into tears...

"The TV channel Inter," I thought, "might have a typical victim of the brutality of Maidan activists."

"Report, please, sotnyk."

"I beg to report," calmly began the sotnyk and put on the table boxes with seized objects, from which the handle of the pistol protruded ominously. "Near the Kozatskyi Post he was



stopped by a grandpa. By the way, the grandpa is seventy-seven years old. He's one of us. He noted a pistol under his jacket. Why you get a gun, boy? Where are you from? Well, the guy acted flaky, delivered a blow and put a knife to his throat.

He fished a bowie knife out of the box and, dumping the contents of the box onto the table, went on:

"This one. Then we retrieved a collapsible knife from his pocket. And non-lethal pistol without documents. The guys apprehended him at once. Grandpa's OK; he's drinking tea in the tent, in case you need him. Over."

"Got it," I drawled...

"Shall we call the police, or what? I've got to return to the post..."

"Why have you come to the Maidan?" I asked the bum.

"I've come to work. I live not far from here. On the Teatralna. They say that you can earn a little money on the Maidan..."

"What about your pistol and knife?"

"Nobody's walking unarmed now," he bared his teeth growing bolder.

"Do not be rude!" the sotnyk ominously interfered. "Stop giving yourself airs of a cherub. Why have you assaulted grandpa with a knife? Why did you resist the arrest?"

"So," I thought to myself again catching the pleading eye of the bum, "I'm now a 'good investigator'..."

"Private," I said to the broad-shouldered guy from self-defense, who was accompanying the detainee. "Please, take him to the WC and let him wash himself clean of blood and dirt and bring him back. In the meantime, the sotnyk and I will make up our minds what to do with him."

It's just been sotnyk and I.

"Shall we free him?" the sotnyk dug it. "We'll kick him on the other side of the barricades and let him get out of here?"

"Otherwise, we'll waste a couple of hours to complete the formalities and register grandpa, you, and security as witnesses... he's obviously nothing but a bum... We've already given him a good lesson. He's got his deserts," I began picking up my arguments.

"We gave him a good talking. Punched him out a couple of times, when we got him on the ground with his knife. We requited him for his assault on grandpa... I've got it. Will do."

They brought the detainee. Clean, washed, and lips trembling more than before:

"Let me go, please, I've understood everything. Do not go to the militia. Please."

The sotnyk answered:

"Militia? You won't do it again, right?"

"Will you pommel me?"

"Haven't you earned that?"

"Don't! I've got it. Let me go..."

The last words were again addressed to me...

"Listen to me!" the sotnyk checked him. "Stop beefing and listen! If I see you in within a kilometer from the Maidan once more, we will bang you up and hand over to the cops. Got it?"

"Sure. Only don't beat me."

"Stop whining, in there without a knife. Ask for the mercy of men here for your despicable doings. Ask for the mercy of men here and people of Ukraine."

“Forgive me.”

“Speak Ukrainian!”

“I’m sorry.”

“That’s it. We go now?” The sotnyk turned to me waiting for an order.

“Can I have my phone back?” the detainee cautiously spat, still not believing in such a development of events.

“Phone, wallet, and keys. Yours? Take it. Make sure the money is good. Like this...”

“Thank you.”

“Once again in Ukrainian.”

“Pardon me, please.”

“Now we lead him to the outside?” he waited for me again.

“Yes. Yes, I think I’ll accompany you.”

The sotnyk smiled with his eyes.

“Don’t worry, he will be safe and sound. The guys have already cooled down...”

“It’s time to make the round anyway. I’ll go with you.”

“I felt uneasy before sotnyk. I felt uncomfortable for lacking resolution... I looked at the documents of the detainee: Mykola.”

“Mykola, have you got it?”

“Forgive me, please.”

“Sotnyk, let’s go to Mykhailivska Square...”

“Forgive me, please,” Mykola got a bee in his bonnet. He led the way ahead of a small group. He looked back twice, whether I followed him. He was afraid...

“Oh Lord, what’s wrong with us? Where, in what jungle of abomination, hatred and fear do we drive ourselves?”

I was walking too. No, I believed sotnyk they would let him go without beating. I went with them so that Mykola was not afraid. So that fear did not devour him completely leaving at least something human...

\* \* \*

He ran up the Mykhailivska Street, quickly and without looking back. Without pistol and knives, with a black eye and a broken nose. Running, he was obviously pleased with his fate...

“Sorry, Mr. Arsen, this is what we do. Without any ulterior thoughts... I understand everything...”

“You don’t say!” I replied him. “Think nothing of it. That’s about the size of it. We’ve nowhere to turn...”

“Remember the day on Kriposnyi Lane? When our barricade was demolished, remember? Three times we hit a bad patch, but we survived and stood up... And this is a trifle... Don’t worry... Have a quite watch!”

“Take care!”

We parted. I knew this sotnyk for quite a time. On the Kriposnyi, on the farthest barricade, on December 8, we were sitting with him and his guys on the snow facing the Berkut slaphappy from such tactics. We held out until morning. And then we went out under the falling snow, with the flag in front, coming out of the broken and captured barricade. We retreated, but we did not allow the Berkut to arrest one of ours. We knew each other in battle. And trusted...

I walked slowly up Mykhailivska Street toward the Maidan perimeter.

The sotnyk... The sotnyk... I remembered walking with him under heavy snow from the Kriposnyi to the Maidan leading people out. “You surely don’t expect me to be always the same. I am not a professional fighter. I also have a different life. I’ve got a firm in Lviv employing thirty men. They work there and I do it here the only way possible...”

I am passing the barricade checkpoint.

“Did you let him go?” the sentry clearly did not approve of our actions. “To no purpose! They would not let us go...”

“Will you eat an apple?” I suggested the red fruit from my pocket.

“There now, I’m not blaming you. Simply we’re fed up with them; they look like humans, but behave like scumbags...”

“Treat yourself to an apple, the night is long...”

I wish that to stop hating would be as easy as to start doing it...



Chronicle of February 12, 2014: In Kyiv, on February 6, 2014 there was an explosion in the House of Trade Unions of Ukraine. Video TSN <https://ru.tsn.ua/video/video-novini/vzryv-progremel-v-dome-profsoyuzov-gde-nahoditsya-shtab-evromaydana.html?type=1700>