

Vladislav Burda, Larysa Mudrak

THE LESSONS OF WAR

The War Chronicles
of the Family Business of Ukraine



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Preface

The idea to write a book about war and family business appeared when, after a year of full-scale invasion, no family business included in FBN Ukraine stopped its operation. Neither the companies, the plants and a considerable share of the assets of which appeared to be in the occupied territories, nor the enterprises that are related



to the marine infrastructure or logistics. And the sea, the same as summer resort seasons, turned out to be closed for an unpredictable number of years.

All that made me think of what Ukrainian family businesses can teach family companies in other countries of the world. If we claim that it is resilience to external and internal factors that constitutes the long-term key to the success of family business, where else in the historical retrospect of the 21st century can we find such a level of resilience as that of Ukrainian business during the war.

That is why it was important that owners of family businesses many of whom came to manage the operations and help the army and were fully involved in the strategic decision-making processes should share their stories. How were they getting ready for the war (if at all), where were they caught by the war, what were their actions in relationships to their families, staff, and assets? How did their business strategy change over the recent year? What key qualities enabled them to stay afloat? What do they now think about safety, location, and resource allocation?

Our book with Larysa Mudrak (CEO of FBN Ukraine) constitutes a set of interviews with owners who keep experiencing the war together with their companies located in Ukraine. The absolute majority of them have their lion's share of income coming from the goods produced or sold in Ukraine. Therefore, none of the owners of Ukrainian family businesses has managed to avoid the impact and the challenges of the war.

**Vladislav Burda,
Ukrainian businessman,
Founder and President of the "Association of Family
Business Owners of Ukraine" (FBN Ukraine),
Founder and Owner of RedHead Family Corporation**

Preface

It is still difficult for me to talk about the war.

I survived after two terrifying weeks of occupation near Bucha with my daughter in the first weeks of the full-scale invasion in February-March 2022.

Over the whole year 2022, I and Vlad Burda, the President of FBN Ukraine, were doing whatever we could and whatever we could not to save the country from war. From the terrible and genocidal war against our people. The war few people could ever expect even several days prior to the date it broke out.

We all found ourselves in inhumane conditions.

We were twirled in the greatest human tragedy—war, and started living in it. And we did not have any time for training on this unseen page of life and history.

I will keep browsing our war diary of FBN Ukraine all my life long. And it also stimulated us to write this book.

“Today is the third day of the war, and I have decided to start arranging warehousing facilities for humanitarian aid at the Ukrainian border. Join us with whatever you can: from ideas to assistance. Already in May, there were 12 such warehousing facilities of Help Ukraine Center. In June we launched the Superhumans project, and its first clients for prosthetics will come in April 2023” (Andriy Stavnitser, businessman, co-owner of TIS port)

“At the beginning of March, the CEO of our Berdiansk bread-baking plant informed me that the plant was sieged by the invaders. But the plant kept operating: just baking bread and giving it to people. In April, one bread truck was fired at just point-blank. The driver miraculously survived” (Borys Shestopalov, co-owner of HD-group agricultural holding)

“I will never forget that ambassador filming party United 24. Dark Kyiv, but so nice. We walk. Together for the first time. Scott Kelly, Andriy Shevchenko, Oleksandr Usyk. And here come Kelly’s words as a precious treasure: “I have been to space 4 times. I thought that the most beautiful light comes from the stars. Now I know that it comes from human hearts. Thank you, United 24 ambassadors. I am happy to share this path with you.” (Yaroslava Gres, co-owner of creative agency Gres@Todorchuk, since May 2022—coordinator of the President’s project United 24)

“We in Biosphere Corporation encourage support of the army among Ukrainians who use our products. Thus, almost over a month we have been directing 3 hryvnias

from each sold “Chysta Peremoha” product from Freken BOCK brand to Serhiy Prytula’s Charitable Foundation for the acquisition of Mavic drones.” (Andriy Zdesenko, owner of Biosphere Corporation)

“Since the first days of the war all Ovchynnikov family members have been staying in their native Dnipro and have been unanimous: we should save the country and the people first, and then think about other business. The KIDDISVIT warehousing facility was transformed into a humanitarian headquarters, and the staff—into volunteers. We created a shelter. 130 sleeping arrangements for those who had lost their houses in the bombing. Tens and tens of trucks with humanitarian aid coming from Western partners.” (Pavlo Ovchynnikov, co-owner of KIDDISVIT)

“We have preserved all the 24 lines of business of our group of companies “Liga” (“League”). But since the first days of the war, we became the League of Volunteering.



Everything we had at the Aroma Kava warehousing facilities was given to people who were in need of help. The SportLife gyms were transformed into centers for displaced persons. The volunteers of Let'sHelp center were delivering food to the elderly in a hail of bullets. Ukraine used to be and will remain the country of opportunities and heroes." (Maryna Bondarenko, co-founder of the group of companies "Liga")

"86 employees of Kormotech joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Their jobs are still kept for them. We equip our staff members, buy vehicles for military units. And that is nothing special. On the third day of the war, we decided that we would not just be rescuing animals but would become a loudspeaker informing the world on what is happening to us during the war. Now the charitable foundation U—Hearts has united donators from all over the world." (Rostyslav Vovk, co-owner and co-founder of Kormotech)

Hundreds of individual assistance projects, ranging from family businesses up to the ones implemented jointly with FBN. Carriages and trains with humanitarian aid and armored vests, drones, and optic devices "Sova," medications, and even trucks with bottles of drinking water. And now we even have our own combat marine drone entitled FBN. It is just deciphered in a different way. Fucking Bridge and Navy.

Over those already two years of the war, I, Vlad and our team have already stored materials for several volumes. But the first book is compiled by us to respond to the ongoing questions asked by our international colleagues on the lessons of the war Ukrainian family business can already share.

We are sharing the stories to transform the pain and experience of the war into power.

Hereinafter in the book I will be marked by initials L.M., and Vladislav Burda—V.B.

**Larysa Mudrak,
CEO of FBN Ukraine,
expert in top political level communications,
political and public figure,
1st-rank civil servant, publicist**

HARD BREAD

*How a company,
with its part under occupation,
can survive*

The Shestopalov family

HD-GROUP

Borys Shestopalov (hereinafter—B. Sh.)—co-founder and co-owner of HD-Group, a group of companies.

The founder of GFS GROUP and SBBI Group.

Ph.D. (Economics).

Vice President of the All-Ukrainian Association of Bakers. Member of the Union “The Millers of Ukraine.”

Member of the Board of Directors of the Union of Ukrainian Entrepreneurs.

Expert on strategies for the food industry in the Agri-food and “food of the future” segments. Permanent active participant and speaker at Ukrainian and international economic forums.

Partner of New Food Summit 2023

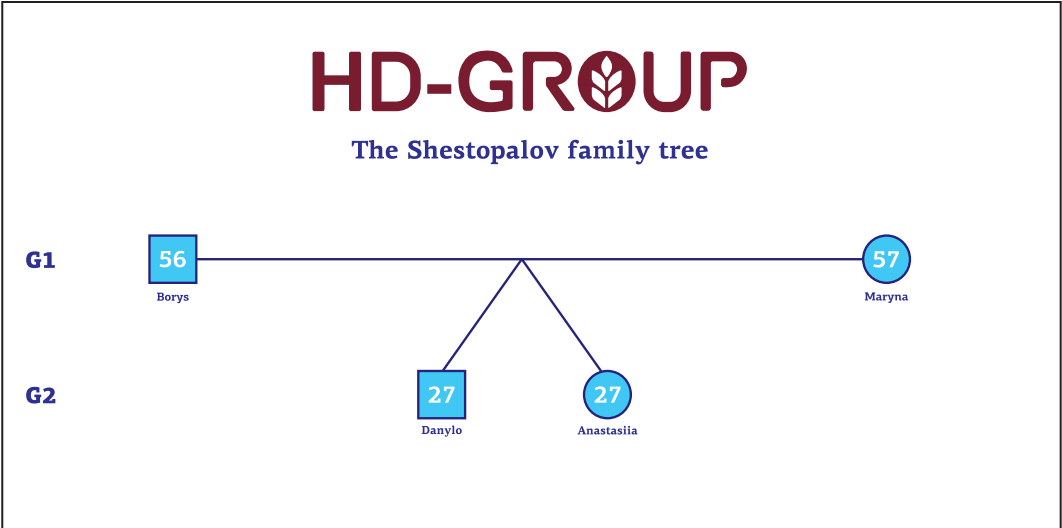
Honorary Consul of the Republic of Austria in Zaporizhzhia.

56 years of age.

Maryna Matsehorova—Borys’ wife. She is a shareholder in all of Borys’ businesses.

They bring up two children together. Son Danylo, 27, and daughter Anastasiia, 27. Both work in the family business.

Danylo and Nastya are present on the supervisory boards of the family business.



“I did not expect that the war would come in its most perverted form”

V. B.: Did you foresee the war and when did you realize that it was inevitable?

B. Sh.: I did not believe that there would be a war. In the late fall of 2021, my good friend, a well-known lawyer, Markian Malsky, Honorary Consul of Austria in Lviv, convinced me: there would be a war. He argued that the situation was so much like before the war that historically and in context it was not much different from the situation before World War II: all the prerequisites were in place, from the battle-ready armies to the mental and political justifications for the need to attack. But I could not believe it.

My love for Harari’s books must have played a cruel joke on me. I was imbued with the impression that humanity had solved global problems such as wars, disease, and famine, and that the only thing ahead was the development of artificial intelligence and the transformation of homo sapiens into homo deus. I was so much in this paradigm that all other versions seemed like unnecessary fears, something that would prevent us from becoming divine people.

I will say more. Even when I realized that a military clash was unavoidable (and it was already in February), I succumbed to another global mistake, as I think many people in Ukraine did: I believed that the war would be local, a repetition of 2014, shooting somewhere on the demarcation line.

These were two parallel lives: on the one hand, we were worried about credit rates, sales, a whole set of domestic problems, and on the other hand, it was difficult to make long-term plans because the spirit of anxiety, the spirit of war was in the air. It’s an amazing internal struggle when you feel the inevitability of a tragedy, but your consciousness says that it won’t happen, because this can’t happen by definition.

I realized very late that the war would begin—if I’m not mistaken, on February 22, when I watched our President’s speech at the Munich Security Conference. And immediately, on February 23,—Putin’s speech.

I was in Dubai. My assistant asked me if I would fly to Kyiv, moreover since the President of Ukraine was gathering businessmen for a meeting. I was developing an industrial park near Kyiv at the time, and I had to have very important conversations in Dubai with potential investors, so I said I would fly on the morning of the 24th.

V. B.: You lived in Zaporizhzhia, helped the frontline in 2014, you know what war is like, and yet you had no clear presentiment of the “great war”?

B. Sh.: Yes! In 2014–2015, the vehicles of the Donbas battalion on their way to the front stopped at my place for the night, and I had a pickup truck repair shop. But the front line was more than 200 kilometers away, and there were no missiles fired at the cities.

I paid for my position by extradition from the Russian Federation. When I went to pick up some equipment in 2015, I was detained right at the border and taken to the FSB office for Voronezh and Belgorod regions. Then there was a decision of a Moscow court to ban me from entering the territory of the Russian Federation as a person who poses a threat to their defense capabilities, and I was driven to the border and handed over to our border guards.

In those years, we were delivering bread some 5–7 kilometers from the front. I regularly traveled to Mariupol because we were at the final stage of negotiating the agreement for buying a small-format retail chain there—kiosks and shops. On the way to Mariupol, I was accompanied by some security guards, and I had bulletproof vests in the car.



The Shestopalov family at the FBN Ukraine event in Lviv, August 2020

I saw the war almost with the naked eye. Therefore, in 2022, I believed that the front line would be in Donbas. I could never imagine that there would be an invasion from seven directions, that the war would come in its most perverted form.

“When my son was in Bucha, I realized with horror that we can only hope for some supreme forces and self-survival”

L. M.: So, the war caught you on a business trip in Dubai. Where was your family? What were your first actions??

B. Sh.: On the morning of February 24, I was supposed to fly from Dubai to Kyiv as part of a delegation from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Naturally, when we woke up, all the public media had already exploded with information about the attack on Ukraine. I could hardly control myself, I was confused. First of all, because I was not at home. They were looking for a flight for us. I said: anywhere, just to be closer to Ukraine. We flew to Warsaw.

The first thing I did was wake up my children, who were in Kyiv. We had a family plan. The gathering point in Kyiv was determined, the routes were set, and apartments were pre-rented in Chernivtsi. All the essentials, including cash, were prepared, and the cars were fueled in the yard. This part was prepared to a certain extent.

The children left immediately: Nastia and her boyfriend, Ihor Stets (*a member of FBN Ukraine and co-founder of his own family business—Ed.*), went to Chernivtsi, and Danylo—to a “safe place” in Bucha.

V. B.: What was your understanding of a safe place back then?

B. Sh.: We had a theory to get everyone out of the capital as quickly as possible, because unpredictable events could unfold here, to the suburbs, to Maryna’s sister’s place, where it would be safer.

So Danylo went to Bucha, and took his girlfriend, our dog, and our cat there.

In Bucha, they stayed under the stairs for a day and a half, while heavy fighting for the Gostomel airport was going on. Danylo quickly realized that Russians would attack Kyiv from that side and try to land an airborne assault, so he decided to leave.

On February 25, they left the city and on the Zhytomyr highway, they came across a convoy of Russian tanks, with a convoy of Ukrainian tanks going to

meet them. The tanks began to reorganize themselves into combat formation, and Danylo realized that his car would soon find itself in the middle of a tank battle.

Maryna had a tracking system installed on her phone, so we were glued to the screen and saw the situation—here they are driving, and then the car in reverse gear, almost at the same speed, started going backwards. They ran to Bucha and hid themselves there. I call Danylo, he says, I'll tell you everything later. A cannonade is heard in the receiver.

L. M.: What did you feel at that moment?

B. Sh.: It's impossible to describe. Fear, confusion, hopelessness.

As my wife says, I'm probably somewhat autistic with a fanatical demand for order: everything has to be perpendicular, square, the bed must always be made straight. Any loss of control over the situation puts me in a stupor, and I have to quickly restore the balance of control. And then the world slipped out from under my feet and broke into pieces and fragments. I called everyone I knew, my military friends: help me get my family out of Bucha. I was told: listen, the situation is uncontrollable, no one can help you. I realized that this was the case when all we could hope for was some superior forces and self-survival.

V. B.: What would you have done differently a year before if you had known for sure that the war would start?



The battles in Bucha in February 2022 when Danylo Shestopalov was there

B. Sh.: I would quickly grow “2–3 legs.” I wouldn’t think twice about opening an additional part of the business. Not in Europe. Mentally and in terms of investment, I feel good in Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Lviv.

I would relocate my family to the west of the country so that they could leave if necessary.

I would shift my focus, of course, from the danger zone. What could I not have imagined even if I knew there would be war? As a great amateur expert on the history of wars, I could never have imagined that it would be possible to attack the Crimean isthmus, that the enemy would enter Kherson, Berdiansk on the fifth day of the war, and Melitopol—on the eighth. What’s the point of that isthmus? One land mine—and the way is blocked.

In 2020–2021, this region accounted for the company’s largest investment burden: the reconstruction of two regional bakery plants, one in Berdiansk and one in Melitopol, and the purchase of 80 leased vehicles. We completely dominated Mariupol and the entire Azov coast. The latest acquisition, in 2021, was the Beryslav bakery plant, and a program was launched to reconstruct it and turn it into a distribution center for *Nash Khib* and *Metro* products. Can you imagine? Beryslav. It has been blown to smithereens!

When I first came to Beryslav, the plant seemed... so-so, but I immediately saw what I could do with it. I went out to the Dnipro cliff, looked at the left bank, saw Kherson, Kakhovka, Nova Kakhovka, and thought: this is where we will move on from, this will be our outpost in the region. This is my deep emotional story. I felt like Napoleon.

**“The biggest mystery is when our people return
from the bomb shelters to the workshops
after the shelling”**

L. M.: What were your thoughts about business in the first days of the war, especially about the companies that were under occupation? What did you do?

B. Sh.: I don’t think I did anything super original. There were a lot of chaotic decisions.

On February 24, at 5 a.m., I recorded a video message to the company from a hotel in Dubai. I talked about the complete uncertainty of the situation, said that I was coming back: hold on, stay calm, save resources and people.

Second, I created a rapid response team. Now we have joint exercises with the State Emergency Service, now we understand what to do when there is no

water and we need to put out a fire; now we have water trucks, water towers, power supply, solar stations, gas in storage, and a year's worth of grain. And in the first days, all we had was just a set of chaotic thoughts about all this.

On February 26, chaos prevailed, but naturally, we stopped shipments without prepayment and, let me confess, stopped payments for a week. Because it has already happened so that the companies we transferred funds to belonged to us in the morning and turned out to be captured in the evening.

It's worth printing out our chats with employees, there are some unique things there. Especially when the director of the Berdiansk plant describes in real time how the orcs (*a nickname of Russians; an orc in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth fantasy fiction is a race of humanoid monsters—Ed.*) are entering: here they are on surveillance cameras, here they are at the checkpoint, here they have entered the bread kiosk, it looks like Buryats.

V. B.: Judging by the video message from Dubai, you considered it necessary for all employees to stay on the ground, or did they have the opportunity to choose where to work from?

B. Sh.: The interests of the root business security and the security of people coincided here. All staff members, top managers, holders of seals and owners



The first days of war. The staff of HD-group shipping products for Ukrainian soldiers-defenders

of accounts were asked to leave, and we were ready to provide a base for them in Chernivtsi. Someone immediately went abroad.

A year ago, we changed the procedure: employees who were abroad but physically needed here were offered to return at least to Western Ukraine or leave the company. At the same time, we retained a certain number of people who still work remotely, such as employees of the financial departments and women.

What else was done in the first weeks of the war? The rapid advance of Russians toward Berdiansk and Melitopol, and then the cutoff of communication in Zaporizhzhia showed that the companies could be isolated. So, I destroyed the centralized system that I had been building for several years myself. I undermined the company's controllability, but I made the companies more independent so that they could survive. Therefore, since the beginning of the war, directors have gained much more authority, especially in terms of operational processes and personnel.

L. M.: How many people are currently employed by HD-group?

B. Sh.: Before the war, there were about 3,500 employees. The loss of five enterprises means minus about a thousand. Some people were fired from the enterprises that were destroyed after they were paid some financial aid. Some remained in the occupied territory. That is, the company now employs 2,200 to 2,400 people.

One of the most important issues is security. Before the war, the shareholders, including mine, miraculously did not get down to the reorganization of bomb shelters. We have strategic anti-nuclear bomb shelters at every enterprise. Only now have we installed water and sewage systems there.

These shelters are not just for employees. I come to one of the plants and see that there are strollers, some man is feeding his baby, and someone is carrying our kettle to boil water. The management explains: we have opened a shelter for the people from the town. Our employees cannot leave bread on the belt, so they stay in the workshop during the alarm, and people from neighboring houses are in the bomb shelter.

This is the biggest mystery for me—when our people come out of the bomb shelter and return to work after the neighboring district is shelled.

I do everything I can for them. Unfortunately, I cannot do much because we are in a low-margin segment. But I will definitely do something good, because people who have gone through such trials, people of such quality, deserve deep respect and some cool off-the-job projects.

I must say that many of our people worked almost seven days a week for a long time. I still don't have days off. However, sometimes I have a Sunday in

Zaporizhzhia, and my friends and I quietly go on SUP board along the bank, to the sound of cannonade. We almost reached Kakhovka. We walk along one bank, while the enemy is on the other bank.

V. B.: By what percentage did your turnover fall in 2022 (if any) and how much did it recover in 2023?

B. Sh.: Vlad, it has gone up.

V. B.: Despite the loss of five plants?

B. Sh.: In 2022, serious humanitarian organizations came to the country, the army grew, and we started performing large orders. I have just received the summary reports: last year we had a steady growth of about 15% compared to 2021. In 2023—about 30% compared to 2021.

**“When the enemies seized our enterprises,
it felt like they had got under your skin”**

V. B.: During the war, what were your actions that were wrong and what did you not have enough time to do?



Borys Shestopalov at the FBN Ukraine event in Poland, March 2023

B. Sh.: I, the shareholders, and the team could not have done more than we did. After a year and a half of war, I can say that everything that could have been done for the benefit of the business had been done. That is, all the contracts that could have been won in the market of international humanitarian organizations, and military organizations for the supply of products, wherever we could reach, observing the dignity and rules of fair business, we reached everywhere, to every client. We have no outstanding debt and no conflict with the bank. We have the debts of the occupied enterprises restructured and offer all participants to work together with us in the same field to seek reparations.

Of course, there are things I would not have done, from my current position. In particular, I would not have sent people to Berdiansk, no matter how much the authorities insisted on it, because it turned out to be very dangerous later.

L. M.: Are you talking about helping to evacuate civilians in Berdiansk on April 4?

B. Sh.: Yes. The negotiation team was given guarantees that none of our people or our vehicles would be harmed. Our people were injured, we lost our cars. But I guess these are unavoidable losses of war.

L. M.: What was the most terrifying moment you experienced in business?

B. Sh.: The first was when the orcs (Russians) took over several businesses. I realized one thing: whatever I had created in my life could become not mine within a second. It was the first internal shock when strangers walked around the plant, took it over, took the money, and treated people rudely. It was not just the loss of an asset, but the loss of something personal. It felt like someone had got under my skin. This was an internal tragedy. I know how to protect assets, but here I was absolutely helpless in the face of circumstances when a black force just came and redistributed everything.

The second fear is missile strikes. At first, the area near our house was hit. We couldn't live there for a while, couldn't even visit that area. But then we did come in, they "fixed it up," and we are fine.

After that, our plants were hit. The first missile landed near the plant. I got a call: windows and doors were blown off, but luckily everyone was alive. Then there was a hard hit on our plant in Kryvyi Rih, two missiles. Fortunately, people are alive, but badly injured. A week later, another attack on the same plant.

V. B.: Does anyone purposefully give the coordinates, or is it by pure chance?

B. Sh.: Each such action has a certain meaning from the point of view of those who fire. For example, a company that has a regional water supply on its balance sheet—4 artesian wells, a supply for half of a large settlement, including fire trucks—could be hit. I can say for sure: the enemy does nothing with no purpose. Yes, there may be misses, but every attack has its own Jesuit meaning. It is either an infrastructure facility or an infrastructure maintenance company. Shelling always has a purpose, it is not a meaningless waste of resources. In a consistent chain, it turns out that the seemingly insignificant resource attacked by Russians played an important role for a particular region, for the supply of the army. This is true genocide.

V. B.: And you also see residential buildings as meaningful goals?

B. Sh.: I don't want to demonize, but sometimes there is an idiotic specificity. On Friday, I participate in the signing of a "grain deal" in Turkey, speak from the rostrum, and on Saturday a missile arrives at my house, and 7 days later—at the house of a well-known businessman in Mykolayiv. What is this? I think it's stupidity and accident.



Borys Shestopalov (on the far right) having a speech at Lugano Business Forum (Switzerland)

“I want my children to be independent of me”

L. M.: Have the relationships in your family changed over the wartime?

B. Sh.: My wife Maryna has become my closest person forever. She is a very reliable rear guard, she has taken on many different tasks for which I do not have the resources, first of all, taking care of my parents, who are at a respectable age. Our parents are in Zaporizhzhia: Maryna’s parents never left, and my mother returned after feeling nostalgic in Stockholm. I offered everyone to go to any country they wanted, but my parents refused, saying they were better off in Zaporizhzhia.

By the way, Maryna and I have a partnership. She is not very interested in it, although sometimes she makes fearsome eyes: show me how our corporate scheme has changed, where from are the changes?

L. M.: Is Maryna a shareholder of your company?

B. Sh.: All of them. She has the stock on par with me or even a control stock.

L. M.: Do you involve your children in your business?

B. Sh.: I am actively pushing Danylo to become a “succession,” and I have handed several projects over to him, including management of private family real estate. He controls all the repairs and rent, and I only finance them by increasing the capitalization of the property item. Danylo and Nastya are present on the supervisory boards of the family business. I can’t boast that they are realistic units; I forced them to do it. We have a complicated, very bureaucratic system of approvals through my legal office, and a separate document concerning the withdrawal of money and any transactions with property can only be approved by me in an absolutely monopolistic way. I scribble a “seen” on the reverse of the document, and then they read it, understand it, and sign it. So far, so good.

The company’s real estate is a fairly conservative business segment, the risks can be counted, relatively speaking, on the fingers of one hand, while the operating business is much more complicated. I would really like to see Danylo involved. I’m waiting for Nastia to be ready for it. For now, I’m asking her to help me with marketing and some individual projects.

I realize that I can be a platform for my children for as long as I want, but my global dream is for them to be independent of me.



Hlibodar is baking Easter bread, April 2022



Danylo Shestopalov and Anastasiya Shestopalova at the FBN Ukraine event in Croatia, June 2021

V. B.: We are preparing this book for Ukrainians and for Europeans. In case of a crisis, what should Europeans know of what we already know?

B. Sh.: I'll speak in a roundabout way. I have just come from a meeting of the CEO Club, where we sometimes gather to talk about life and interesting cases. My friend Oleh Bodnar, the head of CISCO in Europe, shared the opinions of his colleagues from Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland: they say that children, having completed their bachelor's degree in Britain or America, refuse to stay there and want to return to their not quite stable countries. In the West, they are bored, frightened by the limited worldview of their fellow students, and dislike this conventionally sated society. I hope that young Ukrainians who get their education abroad and return home to build Ukraine will feel the same way.

What do I want to say in this sense? We can give Europeans all kinds of recipes, but they are unlikely to be useful. One needs to live through such breakdowns as we, our generation, had to live in 1991–1993, 2004, 2010, 2014, and we have to be ready for anything. To be honest, I have no idea how Western Europeans should repack their mentality to be ready for the kind of trials that Ukrainians have experienced. We understand that if, God forbid, Putin's plan were to be implemented, Europe would surrender country by country. They have nothing like our spirit of self-sacrifice. Therefore, I hardly have a recipe for them.

I would say to them: look at Ukraine, cultivate your national spirit, to the extent that it exists. I would advise them to love Ukraine more.

The business of the Shestopalov family

- ◆ The national group of companies HD-group has been operating in the market for 23 years.
- ◆ From a regional company *Hlibodar* (Zaporizhzhia), the group grew to the national level in 2019 and transformed into HD-group. Today, HD-group operates as an agri-food platform and is a service center with a set of outsourcing functions in the B2B market—from production of goods to provision of procurement and logistics services.

- ◆ Since 2019, the group has been actively growing and expanding its geographical presence, and the group has included Chernivtsi Bread-Baking Complex (Chernivtsi), Pererobnyk (Dnipropetrovsk region), Beryslav Bread-Bakery (Kherson region), and Ukrbakaliya Company Ltd. (Kyiv region).
- ◆ Today, the group includes grain processing companies; bakery and flour confectionery plants; a jam and confiture production plant; groceries; a logistic services company, and a procurement company.
- ◆ Throughout its existence, HD-group has been actively investing in the expansion of production facilities, their reconstruction, and creation of new production facilities.
- ◆ Since 2019, the group's annual production turnover has increased from UAH 1,085 billion to UAH 1,722 billion by the end of 2022.
- ◆ Russia's military aggression has put HD-group in a very difficult situation. The location of its base facilities in eastern Ukraine and the loss of 5 plants since the beginning of the war have exacerbated the group's situation.
- ◆ However, having withstood the first blow, the group continued its development after heavy losses and invested UAH 120 million in increasing production capacity during martial law in 2022–2023.
- ◆ Today, the group continues to implement energy efficiency projects launched before the war (as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy). Two solar power plants located on the roofs of its plants were commissioned during the war. The designing of new solar power plants is currently underway.
- ◆ Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, HD-group has been actively supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the categories of the population most affected by Russian aggression. Since February 24, 2022, HD-group has allocated UAH 12 million for such programs.