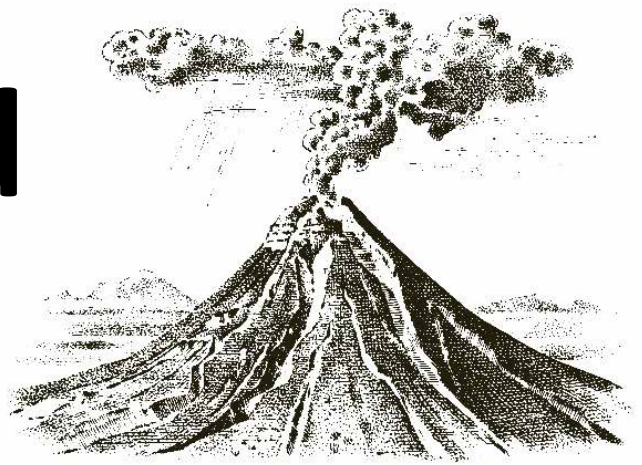


# Inhabited Island



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№ 2

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*"Conscience sets tasks with its pain, the mind acts. Conscience sets ideals, reason seeks paths to them. This is the function of the mind – to look for paths. -Without a conscience, the mind works only for itself, and therefore – is idle. »*

Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. "The Inhabited Island"



*Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989  
(Yury Somov <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>)*

**Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev**, the man who gave us freedom, is dead. He ended the Cold War and saved us from the constant expectation of nuclear catastrophe, released political prisoners, gave us the opportunity to say what we think without fear of being expelled from university or being fired from our jobs. Thanks to him, we can travel the world and choose our country of residence. Gorbachev fought the Communists and the KGB nomenklatura and won, but, like Lancelot in Yevgeny Schwartz's satirical play, "The Dragon", Gorbachev was mortally wounded and unable to continue his work. It took 30 years for the heirs of the Communists and KGB to restore dictatorship in Russia, but in that time a whole generation of free people open to the world grew up. I am grateful to Mikhail Sergeyevich for the fact that we, the people who grew up under the Soviet regime, had the opportunity to build our lives as we wanted, and not as the communist party and the government had prescribed. Now that Russia has once again become an evil empire, we believe that the seeds of good sown by Gorbachev will germinate, and Good will win just as then, more than 30 years ago.

M. Vorobyov

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Editor's Note:

## Why "The Inhabited Island"?

Dear readers, we received the first response to the release of the first issue of "The Inhabited Island" three minutes after the link to the publication was posted on Facebook. It happened well past midnight, on June 1st. The response was succinct: "Finally! ... Good luck!" This and subsequent responses and kind parting words strengthened our sense that our decision to publish "The Inhabited Island", as well as our work and efforts to prepare publications, were not in vain. The newspaper is in demand. Several readers asked us what we meant when we called the newspaper "The Inhabited Island"? One reader decided that we had not read the Strugatsky brothers' novel "The Inhabited Island", otherwise we would never have used this name. Another reader suggested that we would write about the shortcomings of New Zealand as a country of residence and expressed understandable surprise at such an

idea. Finally, a South Island reader worried whether the newspaper would be addressed only to North Islanders, and whether the South Island would be overlooked (the last comment, of course, was made in jest). Either way, we realised some explanations were needed. Here we list them.

New Zealand is a wonderful, fabulous country. We are grateful to it for the fact that we get the opportunity not only to become its permanent inhabitants, but also citizens, to enjoy the freedoms and rights guaranteed by the constitution and laws of a democratic country, to start new pages of our biographies here. The Inhabited Island is not New Zealand. In the Strugatsky brothers' novel, the Inhabited Island is a model of human society experiencing the consequences of the collapse of a huge totalitarian state. Much in this extrapolation model is inspired by the history of our homeland — the Soviet Union of the mid-20th century. The novel is a successful attempt by

wonderful writers – Arkady and Boris Strugatsky – to analyse real historical events in the real world, using the means of science-fiction. This explains the wide popularity and approval of this work. If you've not read the novel for a long time, re-read it. You will find many parallels and associations, and not only with the Soviet Union. For example, the novel describes the details (!) of the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army in the 21st century:

"Soldiers! I'm not mistaken, I'm addressing you like soldiers, even though all of us — myself included — are still shit, the dregs of society ... Scoundrels and bastards! Be thankful that you are allowed to take part in battle now. After a few hours, almost all of you will die, and it will be good. But those of you scum who survive will live to glory. Soldier's rations, vodka and all that ... Now we're going to go into position and you're going to get in the cars. It's a trifling thing to walk on caterpillars for 1500 kilometres ... The tank crews among you, like a bullet out of shit, you know, but everything you get to is yours. Eat. I'm telling you this, your comrade-in-arms, Anipsu. There is no way back, but there is a way forward. Whoever turns back, I'll burn on the spot. This is especially true for drivers ... No questions asked." (Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, "The Inhabited Island").

It is regrettable that from the very first moment of the invasion it became clear that the Russian community in New Zealand is not part of the New Zealand community, but a kind of "island in the islands", a mini-model of modern Russian society. This society is basically made up of nice people ... Remember, in the Strugatskys' novel, the vast majority of the

population of the Island Empire wholeheartedly and enthusiastically supports the Unknown Fathers and the Guard, and Gaius and Rada Gaal are wonderful people who evoke sympathy. We go back to the real world and watch how the community of likeable people in New Zealand responded to the criminal aggression of their country with virtually complete silence, and in some places with open support for the crime. Is this possible? The answer is Yes. In the current situation, silence can only mean support for the war, no matter how hard these sympathetic "mutes" try to position themselves as peace-lovers standing aside from politics. What is happening

now in Ukraine is not what is meant by the word "politics". How is that possible? In the Strugatskys' novel, the PBZ (anti-ballistic protection) towers are a sophisticated propaganda system. They emit mysterious rays that hypnotise people, making them blindly believe government propaganda. The association is more than obvious. After all, such mini-towers are at work not only in Russia, but also here in New Zealand ... (see paras. below is an article by Irina Salavatova



Arkady and Boris Strugatsky, 1965, Photo: TASS

"The Russian World - What Is It?").

The Strugatskys' novel is also a look at the world through the eyes of people who want to understand whether it is possible to change or save this world, guided in their actions by the call of conscience. The theme of conscience and the real result of those actions that are committed according to conscience arise constantly in the novel (see the epigraphs to the first and second issues of the newspaper). This topic could not be more relevant here and now. That's why we decided to call our newspaper "The Inhabited Island".

## The Russian World – What Is It?



Irina Salavatova

The concept of the Russian world interested me relatively recently. Having lived in exile for many years, I did not notice that the consciousness of many immigrants — immigrants from Russia — is gripped by a patriotic fog, that people do not realise that the propaganda machine under the guise of Russian cultural heritage and language development imprints in their souls and hearts not the music of Tchaikovsky and the

poetry of Lermontov, but something completely different, the conditional name of which is the Russian Image, a chimera launched into the Russian-speaking world to maintain the power of the current political regime in Russia, to spread its

ideological influence beyond its borders and to gain access to other ways of influencing the world community.

A little more than a year ago, a detailed interview was published with one of the main puppeteers of political processes in Russia, former presidential aide and head of the Russian government staff, Vladislav Surkov. Indeed, Surkov can rightly be considered the "father" of the project to create a political party of one-man rule, United Russia. According to human rights organisations, it was Surkov who invariably coordinated illegal activities to falsify election results, destroy political competition and organise campaigns against public organisations.

Another successful project of Mr. Surkov is the introduction of a state ideology called "Russky Mir" or "Russian World". The idea and the phrase "Russian World" are not new at all, but they received a second birth precisely after the model of communism as a national identity finally collapsed in the late 90s to early 2000s, and the need for a different ideological concept arose.

Three political strategists — Pyotr Shchedrovitsky, Sergei Gradyrovsky and Yefim Ostrovsky — constructed the concept of the "Russian World", thus trying to hold on to the fleeing post-Soviet countries and not forgetting to define Russia as the physical core of the Russian World. Back in 2000, Shchedrovitsky wrote very clearly in his article "The Russian World and the transnational Russian" about the need for a global network of the Russian World:

"Let's venture to say: the more individual citizens of other states need Russia, the more stable Russia's position in the world is. The emerging Russian statehood can and should look for the foundations of its stability and necessity within the Russian World, in the policy of constructive development of its world networks."

In the early 2000s, the concept of the Russian World was picked up by a Russian politician, billionaire, businessman and close associate of the Kremlin dictator, the aforementioned Vladislav Surkov. At this stage, the Russian Orthodox Church also joined its further development.

What is the main idea of the Russian World?

To put it briefly, the idea of the existence of some territorially unlimited Russian sphere of influence or civilisation called "Holy Russia", which includes Russia, Ukraine and Belarus (sometimes also Moldova and Kazakhstan), as well as Russian-speaking people around the world, is imposed on us. This so-called civilisation is credited with an exceptional historical role — the protection of "Holy Russia" from the corrupting influence of the West. The Russian World is ruled by a national leader (Putin) with the full spiritual support of the Moscow Patriarchate.

According to Surkov's plan, the empire should be reunified, and the main driving force should be the Russians, who by the will of fate found themselves outside the borders of Russia. The goals of this ideological doctrine are to spread Russia's influence abroad, control the minds of Russian-speaking citizens of foreign countries and impose their goals on the governments of these countries. It was Surkov who came up with the idea of creating coordination councils that will fulfil the Kremlin's instructions in countries where Russian-speaking people live.

Many tasks were set: to create Russian clubs, various organisations with a common ideological centre, especially distinguished by awards and grants from the presidential fund, to regularly hold world congresses, country meetings and conferences.

The paradigm of the Russian World was successfully put into the head of the "chief", and the work began.

In 2005, the library-fund "Russian Abroad" was opened in Moscow, in October 2006 the first World Congress of Compatriots was held. The theme of the Russian World received strong support in the church environment. In May 2007, the Act on the Reunification of the Russian Church Abroad with the Moscow Patriarchate was signed. Patriarch Kirill spoke especially often about the Russian World during his trips to

Ukraine and Belarus, justifying the idea of brotherhood of the Slavic peoples of the once united country of the patriarchate. "Russia, Ukraine and Belarus are Holy Russia!" — words supposedly belonging to the clergyman of the Russian Orthodox Church, Archimandrite Lavrentiy of Chernigov, as a motto were repeatedly used at events and meetings related to the popularisation of the concept of the Russian World.

The concept of defending the traditional values of Holy Russia, a crusade against a common enemy, the West, continued to gain momentum.

It was necessary to offer Russia to mankind as a guiding star capable of leading the world out of the darkness of errors sown by the European Enlightenment and regularly reminding everyone that the West was mired in all sorts of defilement.

The expression "we will go the Other Way" has been revived. It sounds familiar, don't you think?

On March 19-21, 2007, the first meeting of the Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots Living Abroad was held in Moscow. The Council was established by the Second World Congress of Compatriots (St. Petersburg 2006).

This has been followed by the emergence of so-called country coordinating boards. If the First World Congress of Compatriots in Moscow in 2001 was attended by delegates from 47 foreign countries, then at the last, the seventh, held in 2021, the number of participating countries increased to 102.

In Australia, the Coordinating Council of Compatriots was established in 2007, in New Zealand — in 2011.



*Vladimir Putin's speech at the Second World Congress of Compatriots*

*(October 2006, Tauride Palace, St. Petersburg).*

*Source: <https://vkrs.com/events/ii-vsemirnyj-kongress>*

By Putin's decree in June 2007, the Russky Mir Foundation was established. The goals of the foundation were declared to be good: the preservation and dissemination of the Russian language in the world, support for programmes for studying the Russian language abroad. The founders of the Foundation were the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The Board of the Foundation was appointed by the President of the Russian Federation.

The fund is financed from various sources, including the Russian state budget.

The Russky Mir Foundation still exists, thrives and, of course, interacts with various non-governmental and international organisations, including organisations that you do not even know about, because their founders live and work among us, in the countries where we live. The foundation urges fighting against vice and bad things in the countries with democratic values, which Russia defines as unfriendly to it.

The Sixth World Congress of Russian Compatriots in 2018 was attended by representatives of 98 countries. The participants were welcomed by Vladimir Putin, Valentina Matviyenko, Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Margarita Simonyan and other odious figures of Putin's entourage. The Congress was opened by the Chairman of the Government Commission for Compatriots Abroad, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov ... and

representatives of the Coordinating Council of Compatriots of New Zealand.

With particular pressure, the concept of the Russian World began to advance in Russia since 2014, when the Russian media beautifully justified the annexation of Crimea to Russia, claiming that "Crimea and Sevastopol have returned to their home harbour." The word "Novorossiya (New Russia)" and the idea of protecting the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine appeared. Increasingly, President Putin began to talk about national identity and the cultural and historical code.

An unpleasant "surprise" was the resistance of the Ukrainian people, who did not want to Russify or become an obedient "younger brother". Therefore, the state channels, which were already fully controlled by that time, began to tell the population of Russia about Ukrainian Nazism on a new scale.

Pro-Russian actions in the east of the country and Putin's calls to introduce troops were presented as salvation, the very ideology of the "Russian World" created by Surkov was promoted aggressively. Russians were indoctrinated with a new theory that there was no Ukraine, that Ukrainians are constantly being "invented" by someone. Dozens of propaganda programmes were launched on television, aimed primarily at criticising Ukraine and Ukrainian politics. Hundreds of journalists and politicians were either bought or intimidated. Leading propagandists continued to receive fantastic royalties for their work.

So it's time to ask ourselves the question: "Where have we been for eight years?" For eight long years, the already rampant Russian World and its ideologists prepared us for what we have now — a full-scale war in Ukraine.

It is no secret that most members of the Russian-speaking diaspora, including members of the Russian Orthodox Church, actively or passively support the war. The reason for this is brainwashing with the help of the ideology of the "Russian World". Both in the rhetoric of Patriarch Kirill and in the

rhetoric of the Russian leadership, we hear that only Russia has traditional values. All other countries have betrayed them. The search for national traitors and foreign agents has become an obsessive routine of the life of modern Russian society. Patriarch Kirill's sermon most recently quoted words taken from Surkov's propaganda theory of Russia's otherness, which "arouses feelings of jealousy, envy and indignation." Surkov, who recently disappeared from the political arena, in his interview mentioned at the beginning of the article, outlined the boundaries of the Russian World in this way: "The Russian World is where: they speak and think in Russian; they say that they respect Russian culture; where our scientists, our writers, our art are respected; respect Putin; are afraid of Russian weapons. Where people are afraid of Russian weapons, this is also the Russian World. That's our influence. — it's all the Russian World. I believe these are elements of the Russian World everywhere. It's our influence. Not every nation has such an influence," Surkov said.

Needless to say, such an interpretation of the Russian World is a real declaration of war on the rest of the world. Since the beginning of the 2000s, through the country coordination councils of compatriots, cultural and charitable organisations of the Russian diaspora, clubs, educational centres, Russian-language newspapers and other organisations have been involved in the network of the Russian World.

Of course, not all native speakers, activists of the Russian-speaking diaspora, "Russian" businesses or organisers of cultural leisure for compatriots outside Russia are representatives of the Russian World, just as belonging to the Russian World is not identical with the presence of a Russian passport. In future publications, we will talk about how the influence of the "Russian World" has spread and continues to spread in Australia and New Zealand.



*Speech by Maria Zakharova at the section "Media of the Russian Diaspora in the Modern World"*

*Sixth World Congress of Compatriots (Moscow, 2018).*

*Source: Final collection of materials of the Sixth World Congress of Russian Compatriots*

## Two weeks between life and death



Olga Belokon

*Tatyana Timoshenko is a resident of Gostomel. Immediately after the Russian army invaded Ukraine, Gostomel was occupied by Russian troops. Tatyana and her children miraculously managed to evacuate from the theatre of operations. Now she and her children are in Auckland. They got this opportunity because Tatyana's husband, Andrei, has been living and working here for the past four years. Tatyana kindly agreed to give us her time and give us an interview. Her nearly three-hour story shocked us. Since the full text of the interview cannot fit into a single issue of the newspaper, we decided to publish short fragments of the interview in this issue, and we will publish the full text of Tatyana's story in subsequent issues of the newspaper as an eyewitness account of the events that have now become history.*

**Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24 came as a shock to virtually everyone. However, shortly before that, there had been much talk in the media that such a scenario was more than likely. Was there any organised training of the civilian population in Ukraine? Were there recommendations on how to behave, what to stock up on in advance, and so on?**

Since 2014, Ukraine has periodically carried out preparatory civil defence measures for the population. In 2015, the first surprise for me was that when I bought a diary for children at school, written in it was not familiarisation with the rules for students how to behave at school, but the rules of how to behave during shelling, during bombing, where to run, how to set aside food supplies. To me, this was honestly the first signal that something needed to be done ...

... Immediately before the war, from December 2021, we regularly received information that Russia was preparing for an attack. Every day, the news reported on the number of troops and on military exercises in the border areas. Members of the military were interviewed. We were warned in advance that such a scenario was possible, that an invasion might occur, and how civilians could behave. That tension was heating up every day. We were informed about how we should behave during bombing, where to run, how to organise our lives. It was recommended that we explain the situation to children ...

Useful information could also be obtained on the Internet, something friends sent, that's how we shared with each other ... Thanks to all this, I gained experiences that helped me survive in the first days of the war...

Until the last moment, we did not believe [that the war would begin, Ed.] And because of this, we stayed in Gostomel. Our things were packed and stood in the corner for two weeks. The car was refuelled and we were ready to leave at any moment. But I could not imagine that my house would be in the sights of Russian troops. or that there would be fighting.

**— What were your feelings and actions in the first hours after you learned the war had begun?**

It was a shock. Because you know, nothing worse than what happened could happen ...

I woke up to the fact when the phone rang at 6am. A friend from America called. He said, "Are you asleep? Get up. Your war has begun"...

I called my husband in New Zealand and asked him what I should do. I was ready to leave immediately. He said it was better to stay put as there were traffic jams on the roads. If I had known my house would be in the line of fire, I wouldn't have stayed there for a minute ...

**— Tell us about your experience of the war. What happened to you and your children?**

... The helicopters flew so low, they flew straight above the rooftops ... We heard explosions, shooting, and we realised that these were not Ukrainian helicopters. These were Russian helicopters that flew without insignia. They flew to bomb the airport ... A helicopter was flying right over my house. The running board of the helicopter was open, and one soldier joked by pointing the gun at me.

**Why do you think it was a joke?**

Because he didn't shoot. The distance between us was only 10 metres, and from the expression of irony on his face it was obvious that he was joking ...

We stayed put. On the second day, we lost water, the internet, power to our lights ... The next day we were told tanks were coming in. Russian troops captured Gostomel. On February 26, about 40 tanks entered our village, about 40, followed by the same number again. As they drove, it was such a crazy hum ... It was scary. We were surrounded. Only then, did we realise how serious the situation was. I called my friends and asked them to pray for us as the tanks took up positions and started

shooting.

... We began to live in the basement of my house. Neighbours joined us. A young couple with a small child of 2 years. They had nowhere to hide. Their house had no cellar or basement. I feared for my children, for the lives of my friends, loved ones, for myself in the first place. I asked myself what would happen to my children if something happened to me? .. We wrote notes and put them in the children's pockets, so that if something happened to us, people could either identify us or help the children find relatives ...



Tatyana Timoshenko

We didn't make plans, we lived every minute, we prayed and waited for silence.

Russian soldiers came to us on the fourth day. They broke the gate. We were hiding in the basement at the time. They came in and searched the area. The soldiers took the son-in-law's sleeping bags from the car and detergents that we had specially left on the street and left. On the advice of the [Ukrainian Ed.] military, we wrote on the house that CHILDREN were here... They didn't break into the house...

On the fifth day, the Russian military parked "Grad" rocket launchers at the exit of our village. They fired Grad rockets in the direction of Kyiv and left. This happened several times. It was scary, I'll be honest, scarier than the volleys from the tanks. After all, we understood that this was shooting at civilians ...

Even then, we learned to distinguish the volleys of different guns, to listen to the sounds around us, to drop instantly to the ground and to take cover. We learned to walk silently and imperceptibly. We learned ourselves and taught our children everything that could save our lives. Even our dogs learned to go outside without barking and to calm down on the command "chick!"

**How did you help your children cope with fear, with deprivation?**

Most importantly, you had to show your children you were not afraid. It was very hard. The children stared at us silently, they waited for answers. We had to show them that everything would be fine. We must give them credit, they showed heroism. They did not cry. Within two weeks, I had forgotten about tears.

I talked to my 11-year-old daughter and explained to her that she had to follow all my orders flawlessly. If I say, "Lie down," I have to lie down, if I say, "Run," be ready no matter what, and I also told her what to do if I was gone.

— **How did you manage to get out of the battle zone?**

... I received a message from a friend that people were being evacuated after all, and my daughter heard on the radio that "a green corridor opens today, and on March 9th you can leave." I ran to tell everyone else .... There was just silence. There was no shelling. I went to a neighbour's house. And I told him, "Yura, we're leaving." He cried so much ... and he said, "Leave. Maybe you'll save your children." We said goodbye as if it would be the last time ...

... I cleared my cellphone of all sorts of information. I wiped out all the text messages, and went around to my friends, who were also ready to evacuate, attached white sheets to the hood of our car. The cars started their engines. But then heavy shelling began. We realised there was no "green corridor", and it would not be easy for us. We were willing to take a

chance because it was no longer possible to stay. With each passing day, the fighting got tougher. And we set off ...

Men were afraid to lead our convoy out of the village. I agreed to go first. First of all, I wanted the soldiers who were standing along the road to see that we were civilians, that I was a woman, so that they did not identify us as military. We had hope that we would pass ... I asked my children for forgiveness, asked God for protection and pressed the accelerator. Two cars followed me. There were a total of nine vehicles.



*Tatyana Timoshenko with her husband and children*

... It's so scary when you drive a car towards a tank. You don't know what they're going to do ...

The first military checkpoint. Thank God, they checked our documents, looked at the cars and let us go ... But they did not recommend going on, as there were battles up ahead. "Don't go there, they'll kill you there. We won't let you go back." But we wanted to leave this terrible place as soon as possible. We thought we would soon be safe, but that wasn't the case .... unfortunately.

I mean, these soldiers were a little older than my son – they were 19 or 20 years old. No more. They were so sure they were saving us ...

While checking our documents at one of the checkpoints, a soldier , said to me: "How I long to go home."

"I can't," he said. "They would kill me."...

A soldier at another checkpoint told me, "Hide your phone if you want to keep it safe."

So we drove from one checkpoint to another. We soon became convinced that no evacuation was going on. There were just people like us who were on the roads hoping to get out of the war zone.

So we spent two days in anticipation and hope. Shells were constantly flying over our heads. We didn't

want to sleep or eat. We trusted our friends and intuition.

When it became clear that this was the last frontier, and we had to act independently, my friends and I moved in cars with everyone through the rear of the Russian troops.

We left Gostomel, but ahead of us new challenges awaited us .....

— **What kind of assistance did you receive when you arrived in territory controlled by the Ukrainian government?**

... Volunteers supported us. Thank you very much to these people who organised help, who spent their time, money and their energy helping others. We arrived in Rivne and were placed in a hostel for tractor drivers. When we walked in, they dropped everything. We arrived late., Dinner time was over. The cook who was going home just dropped her things and said, "I'm going to feed you now." She collected food and put it on our table. Another woman ran to give us the basic

necessities ... Someone took me by the hand and led me to the room where the clothes [were]. I remember them asking, "What else do you need?" We sat down at the table and asked, "Can we have bread? Just bread ..." I remember these women just standing there crying. We had gone without bread for a week. And here it tasted and smelled so good ... I'll never forget it ...

*Already on the way to Auckland, at the airport in Bangkok, when moving on a train from one terminal to another, Tatyana's daughter, Lyalya, hearing Russian speech, said: "Mother, look, these are Russians. Will they kill us?" ...*

*Tatyana and her children are now recovering from their ordeal. Tatyana visits a doctor, as she needs treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. When she gave us an interview, a plane flew past the window. Tatyana interrupted the story, looked out the window with apprehension and said: "I can't get used to it" ... Her immediate plans are to settle in Auckland, find a job, send her children to school. She is also going to organise a support group for those who, like her, found themselves in New Zealand, having left Ukraine after the beginning of the Russian invasion.*

## The Story of a Hero



Alla Shimanska

Dmytro Lahoda lay on the battlefield under heavy, incessant shelling. His body was covered with earth mixed with blood, ash and the detritus of war. A fragment of a tank shell had entered his back, crumbled into many pieces in his abdomen, and hit his spine

and internal organs. He couldn't move. In the frosty winter air, through the fumes and soot, he could see glimpses of the sky and white clouds. Thoughts of his mother, loved ones and dead comrades filled his mind in a confused whirlwind. Soon, he lost his sense of reality. Lahoda was born in the beautiful city of Chernihiv, in northern Ukraine, on the border with Russia and Belarus. It is my hometown, too, although I have lived in Auckland now for many years.

Lahoda spent most of his life in a house that had belonged to his family for a century. After high school, he attended Chernihiv Radio Mechanical College, then served in the air force, then in intelligence. Everyone who has ever known him notes his cheerful and mischievous character.

After the air force, he was going to return to radio mechanics. However, the difficult economic situation caused by the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of Donbass by Russia forced him to seek more lucrative work overseas. He managed to find a suitable job in the Czech Republic, where he remained until Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24 this year.

He could have remained there, but decided to return to Ukraine to defend his loved ones and country, volunteering for the frontline on the outskirts of his native Chernihiv. At 30, he took command of a military unit in a tank brigade.

When war broke out, the heaviest fighting occurred on the outskirts of the city. At that time, the Ukrainians did not have

enough shells for their weapons. It was hard to predict where the Russians would fire, and sometimes the Ukrainians were unable to respond.

As Russian soldiers made their way to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, they passed through small settlements in the Chernihiv region, such as the village of Novoselivka, where Lahoda's unit engaged in a difficult battle. The Russians unexpectedly attacked from the side, using seven armoured personnel carriers, tanks, mortars and long-range artillery to fire at Lahoda's unit continuously for several hours.



Dmytro Lahoda

Lahoda's unit fought courageously until their shells ran out. As commander, he showed true heroism in leading the fighting, but he was unable to prevent eight deaths in his unit. As he carried his comrades out of the line of fire, he was wounded by the exploding tank shell.

Once the shelling subsided, a truck arrived with a search party, who carefully examined the area. The soot and smoke limited visibility and, at first, the searchers mistook Lahoda's apparently lifeless body for part of the war-torn landscape. But he and the other wounded were eventually taken to Chernihiv hospital.

Chernihiv was almost completely destroyed in the early stages of the war, and most of its residents fled. However, doctors remained in hospitals to help save lives. Most of the city had no gas, electricity, telephones or internet, and windows in bombed-out buildings had been replaced with plywood. It was winter, and in the sub-zero temperatures, the sick and wounded were wrapped in many blankets. Surgery continued, but care for the complex cases was often hampered by the lack of equipment, instruments and medicine.

Lahoda arrived at the hospital unconscious and with numerous complications. He needed major and complex surgery, but not all of it could be performed there. Despite his courage and natural optimism, his physical suffering tested his will to live.

He needed to get to Kyiv, but it was not possible to arrange humanitarian corridors, and a Russian air strike had destroyed a vehicle bridge across the river Desna. Lahoda had to be transported along back roads under shelling and bombardment.

Once in Kyiv, he had more operations to clean his internal organs, install multiple drains and help him partially recover from paralysis. But he remained in a critical condition. He needed more surgery, but given the siege in Kyiv, it was impossible.

Friends of Lahoda's family turned to Ambulance Ukraine Donation, an organisation created to provide medical assistance to Ukrainian soldiers. Nisse Abrahamsson, a Swedish citizen, sold off personal property, including a yacht, to buy ambulances. Since the war started, he and his team have been transporting war victims to Swedish hospitals for free, and also delivering necessary medicine to Ukrainian hospitals. Ukrainian and Swedish doctors are now working in these ambulances.

Abrahamsson and his team readily responded to the request for help, transporting Lahoda from Kyiv to Poland. However, the journey was difficult, with enemy shelling to dodge and unbearable pain, because the Kyiv hospital did not even have painkillers to give him.

From Poland, he was transported by ferry to Sweden, where Abrahamsson met him in an ambulance and took him to a hospital in Gothenburg, where he is now located.

Lahoda was examined, then given a course of antibiotics to treat his severe osteomyelitis (bone infection). However, his body resisted the antibiotics and his condition became more acute. He also had a large abscess near his spine, dangerously close to large veins.

Lahoda is grateful to the medical staff from Ambulance Ukraine Donation, who took him to Sweden. He is also grateful to the Gothenburg hospital staff, who are surrounding him with care and attention as he fights for his life.



*Dmytro's transportation to a Swedish hospital*

However, no relatives are with him, and, as he is unable to speak Swedish, communication is difficult. His relatives cannot afford to travel there, or to pay for accommodation.

After further surgery, Lahoda will need long and expensive rehabilitation in a special centre, which is free only for Swedish citizens. He has no one who can help solve his problems. Meanwhile, he lies in a hospital room in a foreign country, surrounded by medical personnel, but his war contin-

ues. With his love for others and kind heart, he cannot understand the Russian aggression and the cruelty he has both witnessed and experienced. Having shown courage and heroism on the battlefield, and having risked his own life, he remains hopeful Ukraine will defeat its aggressor.

Just as a drop of water reflects the surrounding nature, so the life of one hero reflects the fate of an entire generation. It is a tragedy for everyone.

*Even a small donation to Dmytro Lahoda could make a huge difference.*

Dmytro Zhyvov

Account number: 27776018

Branch sort code: 54-21-13

BIC: NWBK GB 2L

IBAN: GB20 NWBK 5421 1327 7760 18

*Please ensure you state your donation is for Dmytro Lahoda*

*An English version of the article has just been published in the New Zealand Listener magazine. The material is published in consultation with the editorial board of the magazine.*



# Will we help Ukraine?



Yevgenia Munro

Ukraine is desperately resisting Russia's aggression. Every day brings more suffering. The country is depleted and Russian troops occupy about a fifth of its territory. Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of inhabitants have been killed, wounded or maimed.

We need medicines and prostheses. Defenders of Ukraine need to repair equipment and buy new arms to replace those that have been lost and to buy

fuel. For many Ukrainian volunteer associations, our donations are a significant part of our income. In this review, we have collected information about the campaigns held in New Zealand to raise funds to help Ukraine.

**In the six months since the war began, dozens of large and small fundraising events have taken place in New Zealand, with the help of which millions of dollars have been raised.**

For example, the Red Cross alone in the first three months of the war collected \$4 million for Ukraine. During only one fundraiser, a 12-hour marathon at the Lyttelton Arts Factory, where Christchurch musical groups performed and Ukrainian food was sold, about \$25,000 was raised from an auction of paintings and huge sunflowers painted by local artists.

Musicians raise funds for Ukraine and without the mediation of charitable foundations. For example, the Russian-language rock band Hit Pump organised a concert in Auckland, where \$13,000 was collected for Ukraine.

The Givealittle website is popular in New Zealand. The site has more than 50 pages where you can donate to Ukrainian families, make contributions to help animals in Ukraine, as well as send donations to various Ukrainian organisations. For example, the ReliefAid Foundation's page, which raises funds for the supply of food, medical equipment, medicines and funds, has already collected almost \$200,000 (source: <https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/ukraine-appeal-reliefaid>).

KIWI K.A.R.E Ukraine, which participates in the evacuation of refugees from Ukraine, has raised more than \$55,000.

One of the most interesting projects was carried out in Motueka, in the north of the South Island. To date, the Kyiv hospital Okhmatdyt has received \$20,000 from the organisers of this project. The fundraising consisted of five parts. The project began on April 30 with a fascinating descent down the Torrent River in Abel Tasman National Park (\$3030). Then, on May 5, a quiz night was held, where prizes were also drawn (\$930). At a meeting of children on May 6, during a Blue and Yellow Day, little Kiwis in an adapted form for

them talked about the war in Ukraine and the origin of the colours of the Ukrainian flag. Children listened to Ukrainian music (\$79.70). On May 7 and 8, project organisers, volunteers, professional bakers from Nelson (\$5,940) and Motueka (\$5,788), as well as residents attracted by advertising, prepared food for sale in the local market. There, in the market, prizes from sponsors were raffled off. One day, the organisers unexpectedly received donations from a nearby tent that sold coffee (\$650) and firewood, which was brought by a local resident (\$800).

The local branch of the international Dobrovoz foundation also works in New Zealand. The organisation has regularly supplied medical equipment, ambulances and consumables to Ukraine to help the wounded since 2014. The fund's account: 031592017079500, the name of the account is the Ukrainian Association of NZ, reference — Dobrovoz.



Photo from Givealittle

In Christchurch, the Ukrainian community holds fundraising evenings for those interested in what is happening in Ukraine. A group of 10 to 20 participants gathers at the house of one of them for culinary masterclasses. Ukrainians cook food according to traditional recipes, telling about the history, culture and gastronomic traditions of Ukraine, about life in Ukraine in peacetime and now, during shelling, destruction and under occupation, and, of course, answer questions from guests.

The possibilities of private initiative are endless. For example, Olena Artyukh and Valeriy Boyko from Auckland have raised more than \$27,000, which they use to buy medicines and equipment for Ukrainian hospitals., Volunteers in Ukraine tell them what the hospitals need (source: <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/medical-and-humanitarian-help-for-ukraine>).

<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/medical-and-humanitarian-help-for-ukraine>

Marina Nekhaeva, of the Waikato region, collected almost \$4500. She sent these funds to volunteers she knew in Ukraine to buy food, medicines, and to make body armour (source: "https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-volunteers-in-the-ukraine-directly"). Sasha Gunchenko, a musician in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, collected more than \$4000 to help Ukraine (source: <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/musicians-of-nzso-for-ukraine>).

Business analyst Rachel Tupou, of Papamoa, a mother of two, scheduled an individual half marathon run for August, and by then had raised nearly \$1000 to help Ukraine's children (source: <https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/run-for-kids-in-ukraine>).

Three schoolgirls from Otago, Hellen, Emma and Lucy, want to help the children of Ukraine. Their half marathon was scheduled for September, and they have already started collecting donations to send to help the children of Ukraine

(source: <https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/running-for-ukraine-1>).

Volodymyr Rodnyansky, of Christchurch, with the permission of the artist Natasha Le, organised the production and sale of mugs with her drawings, collecting and recently sending to Ukraine \$1400. (source: <https://www.facebook.com/dobrovoz/posts/pfbid0wcjUeWgzC4rQ5nMAv-kiMsDT9oLACH6C55C44JatEaXzYobuLRi-tRaVoFUHjthpFl>)

### How can you, our readers, help Ukraine?

You can send money to charities or open your own page on Givealittle. You can participate in baking sales and other charity events that are regularly held by Ukrainian communities in New Zealand. In Auckland, such sales are held almost every week. If you live in other cities and cannot help with baking or selling, you can make small transfers to sales participants to buy ingredients and packaging. Organisers of baking sales in Auckland are encouraged to make contributions online on the Givealittle website (<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/unite-for-ukraine>) indicating that you are sending them for a bake sale, and in Christchurch to transfer money to the account of the Ukrainian Association

of the South Island (account number 031592017079500, name nation). To support baking sales in Dunedin, send contributions to Olga Viazenko, account 06-0323-0527261-00, Baking Dunedin.

Do you like to work with your hands? You can organise masterclasses and teach to draw, weave beaded jewelry, make soap, cook, sculpt or make felt. If you are a yoga, Zumba or dance teacher, you can conduct free classes or deduct a portion of your proceeds. You can hold a chess tournament, an evening of outdoor games and quizzes, a sale of secondhand goods and souvenirs. If you are a student, you can organise a youth party in yellow and blue clothes (<https://www.goalglobal.org/fundraise-for-ukraine/>).

Dear readers, do not wait until you are involved in any event to help Ukraine. Organise events yourself. Even after the victory, Ukraine will need huge funds for its recovery, treatment and prostheses for the wounded, including children. Good luck to all those who do not remain indifferent and help Ukraine.

*Editor's note: We wrote about the charitable activities of the group "Unite fir Ukraine" and about Nadia Dikareva in the 1st issue of the newspaper.*

## Wartime diary

*Editor-in-Chief's Foreword. We begin publishing unique notes that the author, the poet Gregory Oklendsky, (his pen name surname means "of Auckland") has regularly posted on his Facebook page since late February 2022. Written with talent, spilling out in the fresh wake of events, the notes accurately, vividly and emotionally reflect the poet's reaction to what is happening. This chronicle allows us to trace literally day after day, what feelings, associations, images and thoughts were awakened in the poet by the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine, what pain and sympathy for some and righteous hatred for others caused the events taking place on her land. For many of us, these feelings and associations will be in tune with our own. In my opinion, this diary should be included in the historical chronicle of the time that we are now experiencing.*



Gregory Oklendsky

### February 20, 2022.

Muscular Russia —  
black belt to the boy.  
Enough power for madmen  
not to start a war?

### February 23, 2022.

Under the Olympic flag?!  
2008 Summer Olympics in  
Beijing — both the Georgian  
war and the expropriation of  
South Ossetia. 2014 Winter  
Olympics in Sochi, which  
smoothly turned into the seizure  
of the Crimea by green  
men. And then, bloody traces

on the road to the so-called Malorossiya ("Little Russia" – the parts of Ukraine that the Kremlin covets). 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. No sooner had it ended than a shameful

decision was made on Luhansk and, I am afraid this is going to continue...

Is there something wrong with the Olympic movement?

### February 24, 2022.

Mum would have turned 99 today. Almost 10 years ago, she completed her earthly journey. As blasphemous as it sounds, there is a higher meaning in the fact that she did not live to this day. Born and raised in Ukraine (Novograd-Volynsky, Ovruch, Kyiv), it would be excruciatingly painful for her to learn the fate of her homeland. The terrible war that our parents' generation experienced as young people ended almost 77 years ago. And now the Kremlin's Putinoids, born after the war, who did not smell gunpowder, who despise the intrinsic value of someone else's human life, driven by their imperial ambitions, criminal, brazen lies, are leading the Slavic world to a new big war. Unthinkable. Awful.

### February 25, 2022.

The war began on February 24, 2022.

It's a dead end that we have never seen the like of. Neither the former fraternal peoples, nor the soldiers and officers of the armies, nor the Ukrainian state need this insane war. Only the

Pakhan [mafia boss] and his camarilla [henchmen], tied with a bubble and a circular hand, and a bunch of dormant generals who want new titles and awards need it. War does not come by itself. War, like the insatiable Moloch [a Semitic god to whom children were sacrificed], brings destruction and death, the death of civilians, despair and panic, fear and hatred, suffering and cruelty. Remember when we were growing up, "War? This must not happen again! And now a generation of thugs in power has grown up. They have trampled the age-old ties of the peoples-brothers and unleashed the most shameful war against the people of Ukraine. God will punish the madmen.

I have never lived in Ukraine. Many times I have been to the wonderful Kyiv, which is associated with touching romantic memories. The fate of our family was such that I was born and raised in Belarus. My brother was born and raised in Belarus. But at least three older generations — parents and their siblings, grandparents and their siblings, great-grandparents and great-grandparents — all come from Ukraine. Perhaps that is why I feel my genetic connection to this land and love it with all my heart. I am sick and bitter because I am a citizen of the Russian state, which today unleashed a criminal war of conquest with sovereign Ukraine. With all my heart I sympathise with the people of Ukraine, its children and mothers, its male defenders. Today they took the first blow of the treacherous Russian aggressor. May God grant you strength and courage to endure and win. I apologise. Believe me, among the Russians living in Russia and abroad, there are many people, honest and courageous, freedom-loving and educated, who wish a shameful defeat to the Pakhan

and his clique in this war. To preserve this fragile peace, to have a future for our children and grandchildren. I don't have the strength to write anymore. Frustrating. In a terrible dream, we could not imagine that Russia would become a demon of darkness, and the imperial ambitions of the Pakhan would put the whole world on the brink of World War 3. Evil will be severely punished. There is no other way to live. The Western world must set aside its many opportunistic interests and help Ukraine truly, immediately. To show the world that they have learned the lessons of History.

For the freedom and independence of Ukraine! Against war! Russian thugs in power — lock them up. I hope they burn in hell.

**February 26, 2022.**



*Anti-war protest in Auckland, March 2022*

I appeal to Russian-speaking acquaintances and readers in Ukraine, who have not yet manifested themselves in any way and do not express their attitude to the 1st Slavic War.

If you secretly hope that Pu Tin will bring you on bayonets the "pride of the Great Russians" and other cookies, get rid of "Banderites, neo-Nazis, drug addicts" and other chimeras who live in his inflamed imagination, struck by paranoia and maniacal delirium, then I dare to assure you that he will bring you nothing but a Pakhanat [a mafia-controlled state], repression and slavery. Simply because there are no other "jokers" in his speckled deck.

I want the ballet "Swan Lake" on Channel 1 [the ballet was screened when a Soviet leader died]. Inhuman music! I'm willing to listen for hours. Lord, do a miracle! Just one shot with an umbrella!

**February 27, 2022.**

Sunday Auckland.

A protest rally in support of Ukraine, against the treacherous aggression of a crazy neighbour, against the war — was held in the central square of the city. The rally was organised by the Ukrainian diaspora with the participation of Russians and Belarusians, as well as representatives of the New Zealand public. About 300 people participated. We did not hide our true identity, although everyone was wearing masks — the Covid evil has not yet been cancelled.

**Down with the war! Pu Tin is a war criminal! No Pasarán! Glory to Ukraine!**

**February 28, 2022.**

"Russia will rise from its slumber, and on the wreckage of autocracy"

Is the country waking up? What fearless young people have grown up in the realm of arbitrariness and lawlessness!

Police dogs continue to rampage over scraps under the master's table. Occupiers of Russian cities ... All of

Pu Tin's security forces are occupation troops.

**March 1, 2022.**

Brains like to be canned, washed.

There is absolutely nothing I can justify to the people of Russia and Russians living in other countries who still continue to "drown" for Pu Tin and support the most cowardly war against Ukraine. Nothing! Not a zombie box, not a Solovyov-Kiselyov-Skabeyeva triangle of lies and cynicism, not a distorted understanding of patriotism, not a lack of brains, honour, common sense. Nothing! The "heirs" of the investigators of the NKVD, the Gulag vokhra [guards], the breed of balls — the grief and curse of Russia, the criminal Rashist state, which has become an outcast of this planet, a threat to its existence. The countdown has begun.

Russia will either repent and follow the painful, long path of rebirth, or disappear from the map of the globe. Shame and contempt on the Rashist occupiers! Pakhan and his "sixes" - The Last Judgment and eternal curse!

Glory to Ukraine!

These bunker rats deprive us of historical memory. Now neither songs and poems about the Second World War, nor the image of the Soviet soldier — the liberator from Nazism, nor the heroics of the victors can cause any other feelings than hatred and contempt for the Rashist barbarians who turn Ukrainian cities into ruins, killing civilians ... A bloodthirsty pack of criminals from the Kremlin threw the most sacred into the furnace of their imperial aspirations, into the insatiable mouth of the main dinosaur with a nuclear blank behind the sinus. How does the ground



*Protesters in Moscow in Tverskaya Street on the evening of February 24, 2022. Authorship: Akutagawa. Own work, CC*

carry them, those ghouls?! Lord, keep the peace!

Russian fascism is fiercer and more ruthless than the Russian revolt. Lived!

**March 2, 2022.**

God marks the scoundrel!

And punishes mercilessly. "Special Military Operation" – SVO [the Russian abbreviation of Special Military Operation] means Svolochi [bastards] ...

The blue-eyed sky of the colour of the Ukrainian flag is over Auckland. The day will come, soon to come, when the dome of a clear, peaceful, blue sky will open over Ukraine in full breadth, and ripe, strong, golden-yellow spikelets of wheat will stand in full growth in the fields. Victory, independence and prosperity to you, brave Ukrainian people!

Happy New Calendar Autumn Morning!

In NZ, summer continues.

And in Ukraine, the war is waking up ...

TO BE CONTINUED

## The Great, Multi-Talented Samuil Marshak



*Olga Belokon*

A musical and poetic evening devoted almost entirely to the work of the great poet and translator Samuil Yakovlevich Marshak, was held at the Rose Centre in Auckland recently. The evening was timed to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the school-studio "Russian for Children". Why did we devote our anniversary evening to Marshak's work? Thinking over the programme of the

evening a year ago, we decided that we would show the audience the best of what we had managed to do in the five years of the studio's existence. And when we selected all the best, it turned out that almost exclusively works based on the works of Samuil Yakovlevich were selected. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine what our children's literature and children's theatre would look like without this wonderful writer. During our preparations we found out that autumn this year was the 135<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Marshak's birth, so everything went very well with the date of our evening.



*Samuel Marshak and Sofia Milvidskaya, livelib. ru*

It is significant that Marshak's poems and fairytales, written for children, easily capture the attention of adult readers or audiences. For example, adult spectators watched our dramatisation of "The Tale of a Stupid Mouse" with bated breath. What's the secret? "Stupid Mouse" is a beautiful literary work, a vivid story of a pampered son and his loving, but narrow-minded mother, recognisable characters who come alive and offer relief. A mother's experience of trying to please her child by hiring all sorts of nannies and governesses is unsuccessful. The end of this almost detective story is ambiguous

(yes, yes!), and the author allows the reader (viewer) to think up their own ending ...

Marshak's children's poems are easy to remember. They are written in beautiful syllables and are witty. Did you know that the hero of the famous poem about the Scattered from Basseynaya Street — the man who put a frying pan on his head instead of a hat, and who, instead of socks, tried to wear gloves — has a real prototype? Ivan Alexeyevich Kablukov, a well-known chemist and professor at Moscow University, was, like many professors, very absent-minded in everyday life. There were legends about his absent-mindedness. For example, at the table he could ask for a cat for tea, and tell his students: "The next lecture will not be on Tuesday, but on Friday! That is, on the contrary, on Friday, and not on Tuesday." After reading Marshak's poem, Kablukov immediately recognised himself in the absent-minded character, but he was not offended by Marshak.

The staging of Marshak's "Baggage" gave our young participants perhaps the greatest pleasure, despite the fact that all the elements of the dramatisation had to be verified with an accuracy of a fraction of a second, which took a lot of effort and many rehearsals. But we were satisfied with the result. As, indeed, were the audience. How many times are there in a year? And how many months? Imagine that in one fairytale kingdom there lived a queen who did not really know what a calendar looked like. It was easier for this queen to write an order to "execute" rather than to "pardon", because she did not really like to write, especially long words, and she wanted to extend her power everywhere, even to the laws of nature. Does that remind you of anything? A fragment from Marshak's fairytale "Twelve Months", in which the beautiful duet of Vladik Barikov and Eva Kolesova almost professionally conducted a dialogue between the Queen and the Professor, ended the children's part of the evening. Marshak's children's works are a very small part of his legacy. To a person who is not familiar with his work, this may seem unexpected. Nevertheless,

Marshak's lyrics, deep, philosophical, although not as widely known as his translations and works for children, in our opin-



Staging "The Tale of the Stupid Mouse"



Dramatisation of "The Tale of the Stupid Mouse"

ion, deserve the attention of lovers of good poetry. Among his poems especially many are about death, about the frailty of human life. Marshak, this four-time winner of the Stalin Prize, named with the light hand of Mikhailov "Marshak of the Soviet Union", turns out to have translated from ancient Greek poetry in his youth, he also made translations from the Holy Scriptures. At one time, several poems-translations of ancient Greek poets, written by the young Marshak the schoolboy, were accidentally read by the famous literary critic Vladimir Stasov, which decided the further fate of the poet. Of Marshak's early works, the cycle of poems "Zionids" is especially interesting, written under the impressions of a trip to the Middle East and Palestine. Here are a few stanzas from one of them (note that it is written in blank verse, not at all characteristic of Marshak):

I dream: Into our native land  
 We will enter in the lights of the sunset  
 With dusty clothes,  
 With a slow foot...  
 And having entered the holy walls,  
 Approaching Jerusalem,  
 We are silently on our knees  
 This day will bless ...  
 And from the hills we will look at the  
 Valley of the Jordan,  
 Over which the  
 Many Sorrowful  
 Ages have flown ...  
 And over the fallen in the desert,  
 Before the face of millennia  
 In the brilliance of the yellow sunset,



Excerpts from the play "Twelve Months"

We rise in silence ...  
 And tomorrow, at dawn,  
 The daughter of the people will come with a song  
 Reave flowers in the valley  
 Where Shulamith wandered ...  
 She walks up to the cliff  
 A looking into the water with a smile,  
 And Jordan laughs at the familiar vision!



*Final part of the evening*

The pinnacle of Marshak's work is rightly considered to be his translations of the works of Shakespeare and other English poets. How did the poet have such an interest in English poetry? The fact is that in 1912, the 25-year-old Marshak, having married the beautiful Sofia Milvidskaya and realising that for various reasons he had no chance of entering any of the Russian universities, went with his young wife to London, where he studied English philology for two years. There Marshak fell in love with England and English poetry and began to translate first children's folk songs, and then turned to serious English poetry: William Shakespeare, Robert Burns, William Blake, Robert Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling and others. His free translations of Shakespeare's sonnets are considered some of the best, as they convey the very essence of these Shakespearean masterpieces in a beautiful and concise form.

In the second part of our evening, we talked about Marshak's work and read Shakespeare's sonnets and Robert Burns' poems. We sang some sonnets and poems set to music by wonderful composers – Sergei Nikitin and Valery Kaminsky ... The second part of the evening ended with a choral performance with the participation of the audience in the popular song by Viktor Berkovsky on the poems of Kipling in Marshak's translation — "On the Distant Amazon".

Although the next part of the evening was devoted to a completely different topic, we started it with the same Kipling. His poem "The Slave Who Became Tsar", set to music by Sergei Nikitin, has become very topical. In an incomprehensible way, it explains the events that are now taking place in Ukraine. YouTube has a wonderful performance by Sergei Nikitin of this song (in Russian) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9VdxKOlaiI>

The tragic events in Ukraine awakened interest in the work of many talented poets both in Ukraine and in Russia. We tried to reflect this creative surge in the third and final part of the evening. We read new poems by Alexander Gabriel, Tatyana Voltskaya, Yevgeny Kudryats and Sergei Titov. We also read famous poems by classical poets: Vladimir Vysotsky,

Ilya Ehrenburg, Alexander Kushner, some of them in musical arrangement. Finally, there were poetic translations by Marshak from William Blake and Rudyard Kipling, consonant with the theme of the last part of the evening. At the end of the evening, the famous poet Gregory Oklensky appeared on stage and shared his latest works with us. In poetic form, by the power of art, we expressed our attitude to the criminal war that is now tormenting the Ukrainian land.



*Gregory Oklensky reads his poems*

The evening gathered a small, but unusually pleasant audience. The audience reacted vividly to all the funny and other spectacular moments. During the third part, we saw tears in the eyes of some of our audience. What can I say, sometimes the tears were barely contained on stage ... After we finished performing, no one left, some of the audience took the floor, thanked us, shared their impressions. All

of us, both the speakers (Margarita Fomina-Khimich, Igor and Oleg Kazantsev, Mikhail Vorobyov and I), and the audience, understood each other very well. Spectators filled only about a third of the hall. This is the number we expected after we decided to add a third, "Ukrainian", part to the programme: the reaction of most of our traditional audience to the events in Ukraine and to our public anti-war activities manifested itself in the first months after the invasion began. It is surprising that the Great and Multi-Talented Marshak has a wonderful translation of Kipling's poem "If" for this occasion, fragments of which were heard at the evening:

If you can keep your head when all about you  
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
 If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
 But make allowance for their doubting too;  
 If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
 Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
 Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

.....  
 .....

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
 Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,  
 If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
 If all men count with you, but none too much;  
 If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
 With sixty seconds' worth of distance run —  
 Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
 And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

I want to thank all the participants who invested their time, effort and soul in the preparation of this evening. In the

children's part of the evening, students of the school-studio "Russian for Children" Rada and Mark Paznyak, Vladik Barikov, Eva Kolesova, Laila Shishkhanova, Masha Kazantseva and Polina Sharova performed. An invaluable

contribution to the preparation of the evening was made by Natasha Paznyak and Ira Sverdlova. We also thank Victor Barikov for his technical assistance. The evening was supported by the Ethnic Communities Development Fund.

## **"Sketch" made during a single picket in front of the building of a certain diplomatic mission on August 24, on the Independence Day of Ukraine.**



*Ilya Mezentsev*

Today I took part in the weekly protest in support of Ukraine, which is organised by New Zealand pensioners. The protest takes place every Wednesday from 1pm to 2pm. As always, the embassy freezes at this time. No one moves, enters, or comes out. Even the curtains don't

sway.

After everyone dispersed, I decided to stay on with a single picket and, as it turned out, for good reason.

I don't know how it is in other countries, but in New Zealand from 2:30pm to 3:30pm all the roads are filled with parents who are in a hurry to pick up their children from school. Embassy

staff are no exception. In general, at 2:30pm the active movement of embassy cars begins. According to their protocol (apparently), the car leaving the gate must stop and wait for the automatic gate to close behind it. I thought it would make a good photo and I started taking pictures. One driver swore "diplomatically" at me.

There was a buzz behind the fence. Some passengers exited with their heads completely covered in handkerchiefs. Others



left the embassy grounds from the far gate (which is used to receive visitors to the consulate). Eventually, the police arrived at the embassy. And we had a nice talk. It turned out that the embassies are very worried about their safety, but the law allows you to film on a cellphone everything that happens outside the gate and fence (I was asked not to shoot what is happening inside). At the same time, I enlightened the police about the six months of the war, Ukraine's Independence Day and the flag of free Russia. That's how the flags of free Russia and Ukraine, and a cellphone were enough to disrupt the normal routine of a diplomatic mission.



The school "Russian for Children" invites school-age children to study Russian language, literature, history and acting. Classes in small groups.

More information about the school:  
[www.russianforkids.co.nz](http://www.russianforkids.co.nz)  
<https://www.facebook.com/russianforkids.co.nz/>  
 Registration for classes:  
 olgabelokon@russianforkids.co.nz  
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 Musical Director - Alexander Radchenko  
 Tickets: 021029 588 05, 09 947 08 09

Everyone is invited to take part in the next sale of pastries to raise funds for Ukraine. The event will take place at the Saturday Fair in Britomart from 8am to 2:30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September.

How you can take part: volunteer at the fair, donate pastries, disposable dishes and packaging material. You can also help by buying our wares.

Detailed information - Elena Nikiforova (phone 021 08265472)

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