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Do you hear, Maidan?

Serhiy Kemsy

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The following article was written by the Ukrainian anarchist Serhiy Kemsy, an activist that participated in the Maidan revolution, proposing the replacement of the existing Ukrainian state with institutions of direct democracy. Just one day before President Viktor Yankovich signed the agreement to settle the crisis, on February 20, 2014, Kemsy was killed by a police sniper in Kyiv. On the first anniversary of the Maidan revolution, Kemsy was posthumously awarded the title “Hero of Ukraine”, along with 100 other activists that were killed during the events.

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Also, if possible, you should camp near Mezhyhirya and under the Verkhovna Rada, so that the legislature can be picketed during votes for bills that are important to the community.

To organize such pressure requires today:

- create a map with the homes, offices and businesses of pro-government deputies of the Verkhovna Rada;
- to form mobile groups of picketers: at least, to create a point where those who want to take part can apply;
- take care of equipment: appropriate posters, loudspeakers, etc .;
- Maidan's legal service needs not only to take care of detainees, but also to draft laws to be passed by the Verkhovna Rada under public pressure.

It's not easy. But radical changes in society are never made without the efforts of thousands and thousands of people who have decided to live differently.

a person may not belong to any group and simply do what he deems necessary.

If necessary, this structure can be legally registered as a public organization, but this is not a priority.

After the completion of the Kyiv stage of the Maidan, this organization can protect itself from repression, create mutual aid structures that will meet the needs of society instead of the state and oligarchic businesses — such as production, agricultural and consumer cooperatives in trade, insurance, medicine, independent trade unions. etc.

The next steps

As the stay on the Maidan does not bring results in the form of decisions of officials, I propose to expand the list of means of public pressure.

Initiatives to put pressure on pro-government oligarchs look promising, but insufficient. It is necessary to picket the houses, offices and businesses of all deputies of the pro-government majority.

To do this, you can create mobile groups of 30–40 people who will picket 4–5 objects a day. Each group should have many posters, banners and several loudspeakers. Picketing will last 1–2 hours.

It is desirable that police and journalists respond to them. It is not necessary to engage in skirmishes — when there is a threat of physical confrontation, the group disperses and gathers near the place of the next picket.

In this way, one can not only put pressure on the button-pushers — after all, they are the ones who vote in the Verkhovna Rada, the instinct of self-preservation can prevail over party discipline — but also involve a passive part of Kyivites from different parts of the city.

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6. The group may oblige its representative to put to the Public Sector Council an issue voted by the group.
7. If the group does not agree with the vote of its representative on the Council on a particular issue, it may hold a vote on the matter and inform the Council of the results. According to these results, the results of voting in the Council change.
8. Experts, well-known public figures, moral authorities, etc. — may be invited by the Council for consultations, but decisions are made by voting of the Council.
9. Members of the Public Sector Council shall alternately moderate its work. To perform specific tasks, temporary working groups are carried out, which are disbanded after the implementation of these tasks.
10. Representatives of citizens in the Council or coordinators of working groups may not be persons holding managerial and administrative positions in state institutions, state enterprises and political parties.
11. The Euromaidan Public Sector Council may coordinate with political parties when their interests coincide with those of the public, but shall not campaign for any political party.

Based on these principles, people can unite in groups on a territorial, professional or any other basis, elect their representative and influence the general decisions of the Euromaidan community: discuss new ideas in their group, offer their work to the Public Sector Council through their representative. At the same time, they will not be limited in their own initiative and will be able to self-organize at their own discretion.

Everyone will be able to join in making joint decisions and developing a common strategy. In the absence of such a desire,

Permanent Maidan throughout Ukraine

The public sector of Euromaidan consists of dozens of public organizations, which almost every day form coordination centers and declare themselves leaders of the public movement. However, many have already realized that it is not necessary to repeat the mistakes of politicians — we need to unite around principles, not individuals.

Therefore, I offer all the brothers from the Maidan the following principles of unity:

1. Decision-making is based on the principle of “one person — one vote”.
2. A representative of a public organization, formal or informal, shall have the number of votes in accordance with the number of members who elected him to represent them in the Public Sector Council.
Therefore, the Euromaidan medical service, self-defense forces, and kitchen volunteers, as organized groups, will have different influences on decision-making — but everyone, regardless of their role in the common cause, will be equal.
3. From every 50–150 Maidan residents, 1 representative is elected to the Public Sector Council. Small groups should coordinate with each other and choose 1 representative from several groups.
4. In making decisions by the Public Sector Council, each representative shall have a number of votes according to the number of people who elected him.
5. The number of representatives in the Public Sector Council is not limited, and each newly formed group of 50–150 people can at any time send a representative or recall him and re-elect a new one.

I am surprised by the statements that have been heard recently on social networks. Like, the Maidan lacks meanings, leaders, plans, motivations or something else. After talking to dozens of Maidan protesters, I was personally convinced that everyone has their own vision of further action. Moreover, it is possible to generalize all these visions, because they do not contradict each other.

This article is an attempt at such a generalization. I hope that everyone who cares will join the constructive conversation, and together we will formulate a joint action plan.

Implement Article 5 of the Constitution

Maidan chants “Gang away!” and really wants the current helmsmen to vacate their seats. At the same time, everyone agrees that we did not gather here to elect a new good king.

The demand of the community is to transform the state from a feudal whip into an instrument of self-organization of society. We no longer need shepherds — we need community executors who can effectively coordinate public resources to achieve common goals. The Maidan demands that people in power care about public values, not family values.

In addition to the head of the vertical power, many abuses are committed by local officials. People suffer from them not only in Lviv and Kyiv, but also in Donetsk and Sevastopol.

Maidan, referring to Article 5 of the Constitution, invented a remedy against this, formulated by Les Podervianskyi. If we express this demand in bold political terms, we are talking about the development of instruments of direct democracy in Ukraine.

In particular, we need legal instruments through which society can influence laws and those who have to implement them. Ideally, the positions of heads of regional police departments, district courts, prosecutor’s offices, etc. should be elected.

Some believe that society is not ready for so many elections, so today it is possible to limit the right of a community to dismiss any official who operates in that community. For example, the President of Ukraine can be dismissed by all citizens of Ukraine; head of the department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the region – residents of the relevant region; the chairman of the appellate court of the city – citizens of this city, the chairman of the district court – people living in this district; the head of ZhEK – inhabitants of the houses which are served by this office.

In order to initiate such a resignation, the citizens of Ukraine should not prove to anyone the validity of their demand – to look for which article of the code was violated by the official.

The universal reason for dismissal is that they “lost the trust of citizens.”

If an official is fired after a local referendum, he or she should be deprived of all civil servant benefits and receive a minimum pension when he or she reaches old age. He may not be appointed to any public office, but must not be restricted in his right to be elected by citizens to an elected office.

It is necessary that after several showy dismissals they resign themselves, without waiting for the people to express their distrust and deprive them of the last cookies.

I would call it a permanent lustration: cleansing not from those who once collaborated with someone, but from those who are now ruining the lives of Ukrainian citizens or may decide to do so in the future.

In order to implement this requirement, we need changes in the legislation on referendums on the people’s initiative – and not only on the possibility of dismissing officials through referendums.

The procedure for initiating referendums needs to be brought up to European standards. For example, in Switzerland, which has a population of 8 million, 50,000 signatures are needed to initiate a referendum, which is about one and

a half percent of citizens. In Spain, which has a population of 45 million, there are just over one percent of 500,000. In Ukraine, this figure is 3 million signatures or 6.5 percent of the country’s population.

Because of this, only well-funded structures with the support of Ukrainian or foreign authorities can organize a “referendum on the people’s initiative” in Ukraine. They are also citizens of Ukraine, but this can be called a people’s initiative only very tentatively.

Therefore, we need to reduce the number of signatures for initiating a referendum to 1–2 percent of the inhabitants of the territory where the referendum is held.

If the figure is 2 percent, it will be necessary to collect about 55,000 signatures to initiate a referendum on the dismissal of the governor of Kharkiv region; on dismissal of the mayor of Kharkiv – 35 thousand signatures; on the dismissal of the head of the police station in Vradiyivka – 200 signatures.

Of course, it is possible to smash regional departments or collect the Maidan every time. But it is easier and more efficient to exercise direct democracy through referendums – Europe has long been convinced of this. Those who aspire to go to Europe, as well as those who plan to build Europe in Ukraine, should benefit from this experience.

Another important point is that the results of referendums, as a manifestation of the people’s will, should come into force after their establishment, without any decisions of the authorities.

If Yanukovich resigns in this way – society will have a reliable way to remove from power any of his successors – and this is much more than just resignation.

How exactly to achieve the adoption of such a law by the Council?