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UKRAINE AS IT IS NOW: WHAT HAS CHANGED INSIDE THE COUNTRY

With the start of a full-scale war in Ukraine, absolutely everything changed. I have changed. My friends and parents have changed. The neighbor, the teacher, the seller have changed. Absolutely everyone realized something for themselves. Now everyone feels and understands each other like no one else.

I am interested in raising the topic not of the troubles that happened, but of the treasures that our nation received in 430 days. In almost 15 months, we were reborn. Almost every mother carries her child in her belly for 9 months, and then a new personality is born, Ukrainians for such a period have become different. These are new, strong, courageous personalities. We know what we want. We know our goal. We are an independent, free nation that seeks to live freely. For the first time in my 18 years, I realized the importance of being a free person, always saying what I think, waking up every day not to the sound of an air alarm, but to a pleasant melody on the phone. And you know what I will tell you? We've always had it. We were always free and brave, but, unfortunately, we did not appreciate it at all.

Now every Ukrainian is going through a certain transformation. You know, it's like finding a treasure among long caves. Everyone «unearthed» in themselves what was laid down by our ancestors. And I am sure that Mykola Mikhnovskyi, Petro Bolbochan, Dmytro Dontsov are looking down on us somewhere from heaven. They are proud of what is now on the mind of every Ukrainian. They are proud of our strength, courage and bravery. They are proud that everyone has awakened the Ukrainian spirit and patriotism.

Since the beginning of the full-scale war, we have become relatives. The West accepted people from the East and helped them, as the North helped

people from the South. We helped each other with housing, clothes, food. We help our army every day. I was finally convinced that we have the best men. On February 24, there was a queue of volunteers for every military commander of the country. My dad could not stay at home, his conscience did not allow him to do it, so he packed his briefcase and signed up for the territorial defense. I could not stand aside and donated my scholarship to the armed forces of Ukraine and decided to weave a net for the front. All my friends and acquaintances did so. We slept in the basement. Every night before going to sleep, I closed my eyes and imagined how my energy covers the sky over Ukraine, like a dome. It was a spiritual practice.

We took everything Russian and throw it away from us. We demolish monuments to Russian writers and public figures. Ukraine should be for Ukrainians. This is our home and it is only for us.

The enemy destroyed about 40 percent of the entire energy infrastructure. Sometimes we have power outages. This will not break us, because it is better to be without electricity for a certain time than a lifetime under Russian occupation. Instead, we now have more time to communicate with each other. As soon as the power goes out in our dorm, we get together and play board games. It brings us closer. Someone finds people close in interest, someone finds love. We care about each other and that is the most important thing. We are people. We love and respect our Ukrainian family.

The war taught us to take care of ourselves and the people around us. In this difficult time, every Ukrainian is sincere and kind to relatives and strangers. We understood how important it is to hug, care, talk. People are treated by other people. Ukrainians treat Ukrainians. When I go by public transport, I look at other people and I am always convinced of what an amazingly beautiful nation we have! We have such wonderful men and women, so beautiful. Everyone has their own charm, their own genetic code.

Now I perceive every Ukrainian as a close friend and I understand that I feel most comfortable at home, in Ukraine. My adventure dreams have changed.

Previously, I wanted to visit the Suleymaniye Mosque in Turkey, see the Eiffel Tower, and now I want to visit the island of Khortytsia, visit Askania-Nova, see «Haidamatskyi Yar» with my own eyes. I don't want to rest in Egypt or Turkey, my soul longs to sunbathe under the Ukrainian sun in my native Odessa or Kherson. Indeed, it is true that it is only when we lose something than we begin to appreciate it. Now every Ukrainian soul values their own home. I love Ukrainian lakes, fields, rivers. And there is no better place for me than at home, my dear Ukraine! And from Transcarpathia to Luhansk, from Kyiv to Crimea – we are together, we are strong, we are invincible. We know what we need, we know what we want. We are the phoenix bird, we will revive and become even stronger, even more courageous. The unbreakable Ukrainian nation will live forever. Thank you, my people, that I am me. I have a great honor to belong to my people!