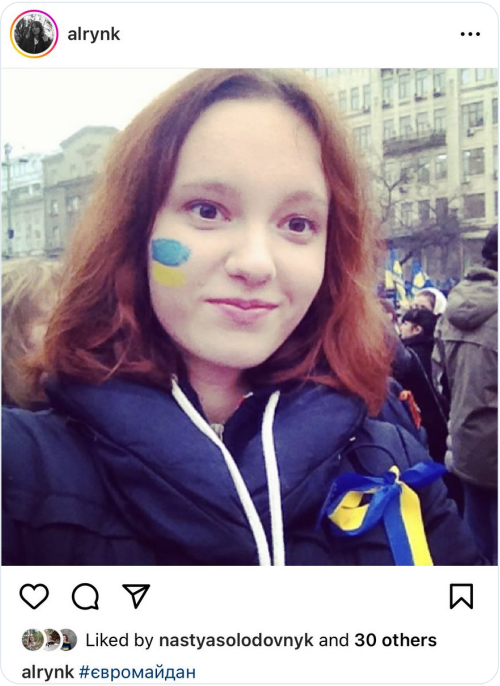
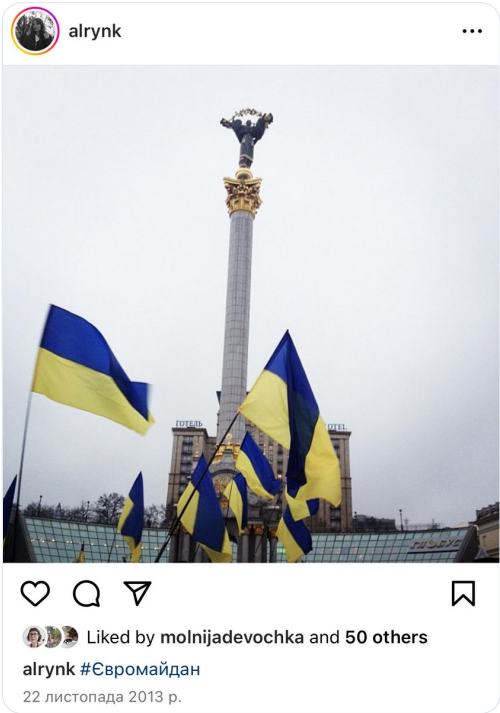




Oleksandra Povoroznyk 🇺🇦 @rynkrnyk

Nov 21 · 22 tweets · [rynkrnyk/status/1594669890509701120](https://twitter.com/rynkrnyk/status/1594669890509701120)

It's 9 years since the beginning of the Maidan revolution, which began as a protest led mainly by students and journalists, and ended up changing the fate of our country. This is what the early days felt and looked like: November drizzle, ironic posters and earnest students.



You could see signs and posters referencing the movement all over town: in bars and cafes, on university corridors and students' backpacks. Some of them were in Ukrainian, while others were in Russian or English. My dad – the most mild-mannered person I know – helped put up a



huge banner saying «поймите, нас забало» (“please understand that we’re fucking tired”). I’ve never heard him swear before or since that time.

Since so many students (and professors) were skipping classes to join the protests, my university held an official students' council and decided that we'd participate in the protests "officially": class attendance became only semi-mandatory and we'd walk in columns from Podil to



Maidan, and before that we'd gather and make hand drawn posters together. However, nobody was forced or told to join the protests — it was just a choice many of us agreed on.

There were open lectures held right in the middle of the protests, as well as spontaneous gigs by indie bands (and, later, by hugely influential artists such as Okean Elzy). Why were so many people from different backgrounds flocking to the protesters? Well, it wasn't just that




our government had broken their promise to try and strengthen our ties with the EU (although that was what had gotten the people started in the very beginning) — it was mostly the fact that they had sent the police to rough up unarmed students who were spending the night in the

capital's Independence Square as part of their protest. Many of these students were minors who were just peacefully sitting or standing around with banners or singing songs about a brighter future for Ukraine. When the news of this insane attack got out, the students' parents,

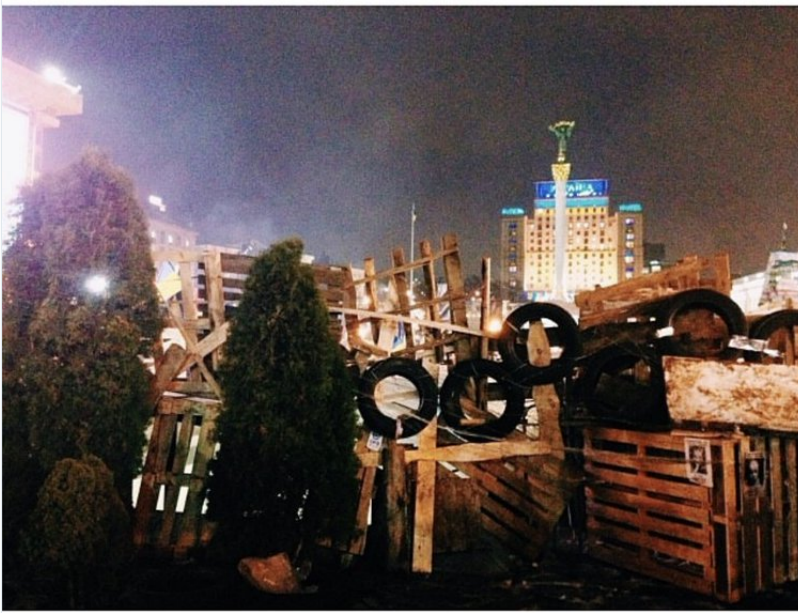
friends, families, professors and even grandparents flocked to Maidan from all over Ukraine to voice their disgust with our government, and the protest movement grew into something HUGE. But the government obviously didn't want to back down, so they started sending policemen to





hose down the protesters with cold water or arrest them on bogus charges when they would walk home at night. The protesters, in turn, started building barricades such as this one:




alrynk
Євромайдан

...




   🔖

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alrynk Де ще проводити вечори, як не на барикадах? Чудова атмосфера, приємні люди, чеський рок та лекції від найяскравіших... [більше](#)

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13 грудня 2013 р.

The nights (and days) grew colder, so the people who weren't that good at building barricades or writing manifests or clashing with the police would bring food and make hot tea. I spent several weeks making tea and sandwiches for the other protesters in between classes. And no,

 **alrynk** ...



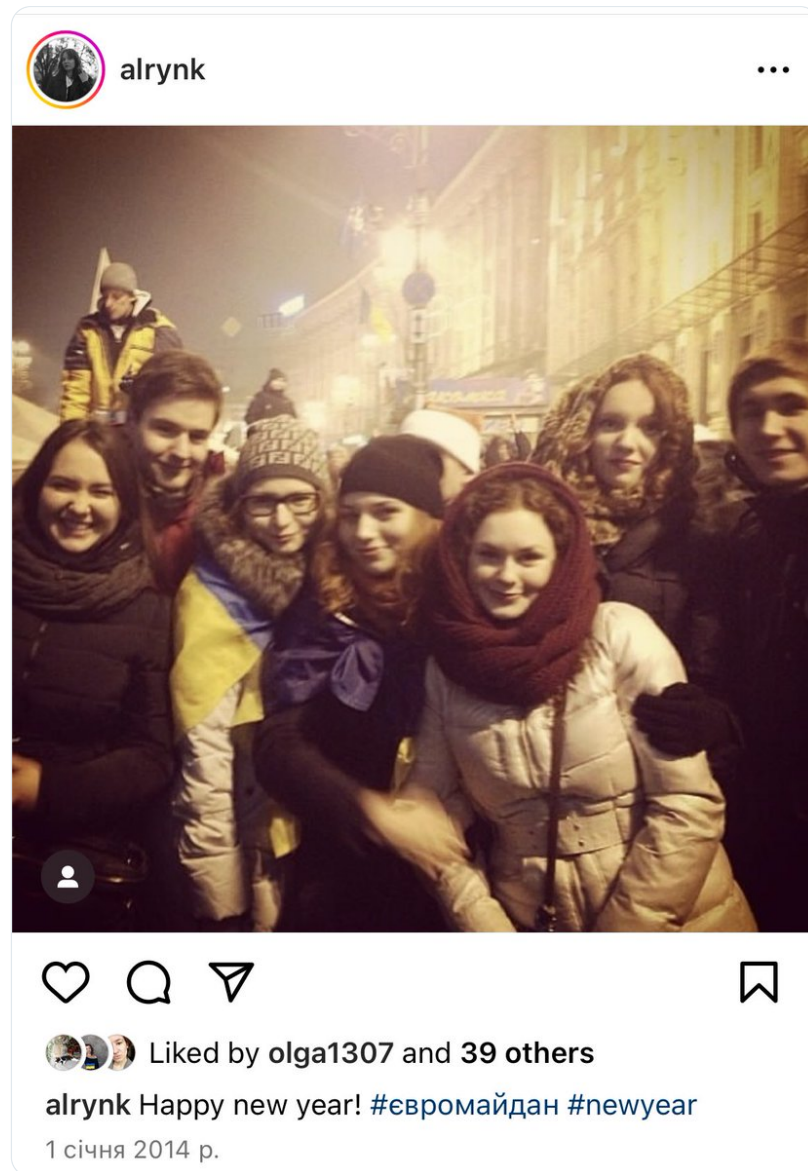
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alrynk Королева чаеклонки. [#squaready](#) [#vsco](#) [#vscolovers](#) [#евромайдан](#) [#food](#) [#kiev](#) [#ukraine](#)

18 грудня 2013 р.

I didn't get a dime from the CIA. Feels kind of unfair, right? But anyway, when NYE rolled around, huge numbers of people celebrated it right in the middle of Independence Square, surrounded by barricades and people they'd never met before but formed an instant connection with.



It was beautiful, inspiring, and then — scary and horrifying. Our government tried banning all public gatherings and anything that could even remotely resemble a protest. The riot police got even more aggressive. But the protesters didn't back down — they just built stronger

barricades and started arming themselves with whatever they could find in their kitchen cabinets. And then, starting with the 19th of January, the clashes got so violent that the riot police were actually killing people in the middle of the streets. In response to this,

protesters started barricading themselves in government buildings and making actual fortifications. On the 18th of February, a huge wave of protesters wearing utility helmets and holding makeshift shields started moving towards the parliament building. And what did the government

do? They ordered snipers to fire at the protesters. Over the next two days roughly a hundred protesters — armed with bricks and burning tires! — were slaughtered by the police. Many more were wounded.



And yet the protesters still didn't back down. Now, by then my parents had pretty much locked me up at home to keep me from participating in anything actually dangerous, so I know most of what happened next from TV reports and livestreams and witness accounts from friends who

were brave enough to be there. But the protesters being killed by the police weren't radicals or professionals, they were ordinary people who felt there was no going back. Just... you know, the bravest of the bunch. And they stood strong, despite the bloodshed and horror all

around them. They fought the riot police to get back anyone who'd been arrested, they shielded the wounded and sobbed over the dead, but they still kept moving towards the Parliament. And then... Yanukovych, the uber-corrupt president who'd started all of this just fled to Russia.

The Parliament agreed to hold a new election and get the riot police out of the city. The protesters slowly took down the barricades. It was victory — but one that tasted of blood and smoke. Countless people had lost friends and family members, and even more had suffered psychological trauma of the worst kind. But life slowly went back to normal: the burned and partially wrecked city streets were cleaned up and rebuilt, the killed protesters were buried and will always be remembered as heroes, while the riot police mostly fled to Russia.

Elections were held — and, for the first time in a while, they were actually fair and transparent ones. Petro Poroshenko won and became president. In a few months, Russia attacked and annexed Crimea and sent their plain-clothed soldiers, thugs and spies into our Eastern cities.

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