

I accept the implied accusation that I am writing this personal letter in defense of President Halyna Hryn and her slate because I was and still am part of it. But that by itself is a meaningless accusation. All members of both slates are doing that; it is called campaigning. I am now writing in support of Halyna Hryn and her slate for two reasons:

1. Because this slate is interested in and committed to becoming part of an American and English language intellectual society. Why? Because English is the lingua franca of the whole world. It strikes me as very ironic, that as Ukraine is currently facing a real threat of being invaded and very likely losing part of her land, so nicely named by Putin as Novorossiia, we have spent the last 8 months squabbling over- what? Basically, the concepts that keep coming back over and over again, besides the *quasi-dictatorship* of Harvard, are the “innocence” of Vasyl Lopukh. Now, I have nothing personal against Mr. Lopukh. But professionally, I most certainly do.
2. So, what do I have against Mr. Lopukh professionally?
 - a. I know something about non-profits, having been a Music Director of the Nevada Symphony for 15 years, and a few other organizations. Mr. Lopukh was hired as Office Director/Executive Director of NTSHa. In other words, he was paid approximately \$60,000 a year to manage and run its office.
 - b. For some reason that only made sense in the Ukrainian/USA diaspora, he was also a voting member of the Board. OK, the error was not Mr. Lopukh’s but the decision of the board at that time. Twenty or so years ago the board treated the Society as something beyond American non-profit traditions, following some commonly-held diaspora community rules.
 - c. There was nothing wrong with Mr. Lopukh deciding to run for President in the upcoming election. What was most decidedly wrong was for him to hide that fact while still working for Halyna Hryn and the current board. Dr. Hryn found out about that little footnote by sheer accident when she called Dr. Motyl to see if he was willing to return as a member of the board again. At that point he informed her that he could not, as he was on the board of the competing slate which had Mr. Lopukh as President. What Mr. Lopukh should have done was inform Dr. Hryn of his intention and take a leave of absence as Office Director. He could have worked out some manner of making it as smooth as possible. But he most definitely did not!
 - d. In anyone’s book of organizations’ proper behavior, this was a clear and imminently dangerous example of conflict of interest. Any good American lawyer will tell you that. It was also improper for a couple of members of the current board who accepted seats on the new slate too and remained mute about that fact. When it all came out and Dr. Hryn fired Mr. Lopukh (there was no other choice), there started a chorus of cries over Dr. Hryn’s “cruelty” in firing a man close to his retirement (although unemployment insurance would have taken care of most of that). Some members of the Board said “Can we work that out, like good members of our *hromada*?” Lopukh suggested that he would reject the presidency of the new slate if all was forgiven. In my professional opinion, Dr. Hryn was correct to say ‘no’; that she had lost her confidence in him, who was her right hand in the organization.

- e. What happened next, was interesting: various “sins” of the current board and previous boards began to be discussed and most importantly, Mr. Lopukh became a sort of St. Sebastian who was being assassinated by the *slings and arrows of outrageous fortune* (sorry to the Bard). So, Dr. Motyl took over the slate as President and Mr. Lopukh became 1st Vice President, now the pretender to the throne.
- f. I am not defending certain matters that came up as part of the Dr. Motyl campaign that pointed to errors committed by the previous and current boards. Democratic growth, unlike autocratic, is a complicated process and often is done by two steps forward and one step backward. But in pointing out some weaknesses, a fair amount of mud was thrown at the current board, which has been pointed out by a number of “letters” made public. One can argue about details of interpretation, but one cannot argue the simple fact that the manner by which Mr. Lopukh went about (and was supported by some members of the current board in secret) was totally a partisan action, or even a form of a coup.

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December 2, 2021