

PRESS RELEASE

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__by Sebastian Płocharski / Glasgow 20019 / Translators: ang: Anna Marchwiak; rus: Viktorija Szajnoga; ukr: Marta Kossakowska

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Ad1.

Interactive social map of the war in Donbas 2020.

Ad.2

Sebastian Płocharski is a Polish artist and activist residing in Glasgow (Scotland). He is working on a documentary about the war in Donbas (Ukraine) entitled 'Czarna Kawa Zamieszana Kałasznikowem' (ang. '*Black Coffee Stirred With Kalashnikov*') information about which can be found at MakeCoffeeNotWar.info (previously MakeCoffeeNotWAR.org). Currently, he is also working on creating an interactive social map of Donbas and a photo documentary. After 3 years he is returning to the war zone to travel around it on his bike. The war in Donbas has been ongoing since April 2014.

In 2015, Sebastian spent 8 months on the front line where he lived with the soldiers and civilians collecting materials for his documentary, which analyses and puts the war zone in a social and philosophical context. This time he is returning to Donbas to create a social map of the region which will include information about the most devastated by war areas populated by civilians. This work is a continuation of Sebastian's master's thesis written under supervision of Prof. Leon Andrzejewski (Nicolaus Copernicus University) and defended in 2008. The thesis was entitled 'Mapa sozologiczna gminy Lubicz' (ang. 'Sozological map of Lubicz region' (Poland)). In his thesis he explored the issue of human borne environmental degradation. The map is to serve as a source of information for humanitarian organisations to help them with a better distribution of international aid. The aim of the

return to Donbas is also to update the materials for the documentary and series of photojournalist pieces, which aim to show the public eye of the British and others the fate of people living hundreds of miles away.

“Living between Scotland and Ukraine allowed me to see many graphic and subtle metaphors balancing on various existential planes, which makes me feel competent in telling a story of a few that, I hope, may stir a fraction of the Universe and by this help to rebuild its better part.”

The journey starts on 30 December 2019 and will last the entire winter season. Sebastian will travel around the areas affected by the war on his bike, which will allow him to analyse the most remote and confined communities, help them in everyday burdens during a cold winter and show their forgotten by the world lives to the scene of international politics.

ad.3

‘I want to be part of Donbas again, be as close as possible and that is why I chose to travel by bike; mainly to maintain my freedom and to cover every centimetre of land possible. Travelling by bike in the winter may seem like a ludicrous idea which is as ludicrous as the idea of the war. I would like to show the struggles of the forgotten people of Donbas who need to build their lives amid political instructions and analyses.’

‘I want to feel as vulnerable as they do at least for a brief moment thus I chose to travel in the winter. Although I have been preparing for this expedition for the past 2 years, it is going to be a true challenge for me. The winter season in Donbas is extremely cold and snowy. As I want to stay in agreement with nature and myself, I travel only by train and bike in line with the concept of a famous traveller Marek Kamiński – No Trace – without leaving a trace of myself in either the environment or the local communities.’

‘Previously in Donbas me and my actions were used to create propaganda, I was imprisoned and continuously interrogated. I do not think that there is anything worse that can come my way.’

“In 2008 during my geomorphological studies under supervision of professor Andrzejewski as part of my master’s thesis I attempted to create an interactive sozological map of Lubicz region. A sozological map is a map that shows places which should be protected due to both their ecological status and contamination of the area. With such map geomorphologists can calculate the effects of an excessive

devastation of the environment and propose a solution, which could help minimise its negative outcomes. I would like to attempt and create a social map of Donbas that would show areas at the highest risk of humanitarian disaster and analyse the possible ways of mitigating the war related devastation in Donbas.'

'My actions, which I am posting about on MakeCoffeeNotWar.info and also on a website of an organisation I am currently opening, WheelsAgainstWar.org, are 'grassroot' actions resulting from my own and private believes. I have no external organisations or governments to back me up. Funding of my actions comes from my own pocket and also from private donors. I am an independent researcher and I will remain one.'

'The last time when I participated in Donbas's life in 2016, on numerous occasions I was hosted by ordinary people who would welcome me with open arms into their households, show me their devastated from bullets kitchens and prepare a dinner for me in either a room that served as a temporary kitchen or outside the house on a rough-and-ready table. I am both terrified and curious to see how people of Donbas cope during the cold continental winter.'

'I have spent a lot of time cycling over the past 3 years doing between 300 and 500 kilometres a week; I was battling my own internal war. I've grown up, become humble and prepared myself to tell the story of Donbas.'

'In the past few years, I spent every single second of my life with the war; I would wake up with her next to me and fall asleep in her arms. War is not contained in a single immediate strike. It lasts. I've learnt that dry and methodical concept from 'On war' written by Carl von Clausewitz. I have observed that that war is a cycle of actions and reactions, operations and counteroperations, attacks and retaliations, constant entangling into extremes. War is an act of violence taken to its last extreme. Everything is planned and simulated to the smallest single detail with the aid of mathematics, algorithms and, in the present days, the advanced technology. Modern war is completely algorithmic and calculated. People are only another variable in the equation that leads to a favourable outcome for one of the parties. And as people are a renewable resource, they are being sacrificed to lead political interests of the nation, the country as a whole. This must be underlined and emphasized. Therefore, I strongly believe in activism and reporting on humanitarian disaster in Donbas. We need to induce pressure and exert real social action to raise the awareness of the elites of the world.'

Ad.4

January – March 2020 / Donbas – Ukraine

Project's website: <http://MakeCoffeeNotWAR.info>

Organisation's website: <http://WheelsAgainstWAR.org>

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Contact person:

Sebastian Płocharski

MakeCoffeeNotWAR.info

The Space - 257 London Road, G40 1PE

Mail: contact@sebastianplocharski.com

Phone: +44 7380386989

Personal site and bio: <http://sebastianlocharski.com>