

Lviv primes its defences; London's cosy welcome for one oligarch and a kitsch take on politics

Russia's invasion of Ukraine entered a third week, with several towns in the east and south suffering under grim conditions. In the western city of Lviv, life has gone on largely as normal - though the threat was brought home to many residents by a deadly missile assault on a military base in the nearby town of Yavoriv last weekend. Lorenzo Tondo and Peter Beaumont report on the mood in a city considered to be Ukraine's cultural heart, and the preparations being made for a Russian assault.

Also this week, Mark Rice-Oxley separates truth from fiction over Russia's claims for justification of its actions. Luke Harding speaks to foreign fighters flocking to Ukraine's aid, and we also hear from the country's hidden army of young, tech-savvy workers who are turning their talents to the cyber-war effort.

Moscow may have been surprised by the extent of western economic sanctions. But as fuel prices rise sharply in Europe and the US, how long will popular support be sustained in the west, and can Russia's vast fossil fuel industry really be throttled? Diplomatic editor Patrick Wintour takes a deep dive into a global dilemma, while Larry Elliott considers the significance of the western corporate retreat from Russia, symbolised by the closure of McDonald's restaurants.

Ukraine invasion [Page 7](#) →

While the west has scrambled to shut off Moscow's access to financial assets, attention has turned to Britain's cosy relationship with the Russian oligarchs. How and why did London afford them such a warm welcome? Oliver Bullough chronicles the case of Dmitry Firtash, a gas billionaire who was accepted into the heart of the British establishment despite being wanted for alleged bribery by the FBI.

No questions asked [Page 34](#) →

Over the course of his career as a Guardian foreign correspondent, Ian Black amassed a large collection of political curiosities gathered from the stopping points on his travels. From Donald Trump toilet brushes to Muammar Gaddafi carpets, he takes us on a kitsch odyssey through recent history.

My own rogues' gallery [Page 40](#) →

Returning to the Ukraine invasion, the Culture pages profile Natalya Sindyeva, the head of the now-closed independent Moscow broadcaster TV Rain. There's also a guide to a cinematic canon to help make sense of Ukraine's recent history.

Then, as theatres start to welcome back full houses after Covid, we look at the growing problem of rowdy and disruptive behaviour in the aisles.

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On the cover
The western Ukrainian city of Lviv is often described as the soul of the country and, despite the invasion, life there has gone on largely as normal. But citizens are well aware that they could be next on Vladimir Putin's hit list, and have been taking steps to prepare themselves for the worst.

Photograph: Bernat Armangué/AP



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