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Ukraine

# The elections in Ukraine - a working class viewpoint

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**The current conflict in the Ukraine is not a fight between democracy and autocracy. From that point of view, there is no difference between Yanukovich and Yushchenko. They both have pillaged and are pillaging the Ukrainian people and state.**

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/yushyan.jpg>]

Yushchenko's main slogan at his rallies was: "We have to create rich people; then they we will help the poor." He does not offer any opportunity for working people to participate actively in political and economic life, to be creators of their own history, or even to work honestly and to earn decently. Their role rather is to patiently await the largesse of the rich.

Neither of the candidates represents the interests of the working people. Two oligarchic clans are fighting for power to make fantastic profits and to appropriate what has not yet been privatized. All their policies will be based on exploitation of the working people. What is being decided is who next will rape the nation.

Of course, it is wrong to behave brazenly like Kuchma and his regime. And after the demonstrations in the squares, people will not be the same - that is a positive thing. People will have learned to resist and maybe they will begin to understand better their own interests and to demand to be respected.

The workers, blue and white-collar, are not in the squares. They still do not have their own organizations. The students who have come out into the central square of Kiev do not yet understand their interests. They are drawn by the perspective of victory.

They do not shout: "Democracy in politics and in the economy!" "Respect the rights of working people!" "Power to the people!" They are shouting: "Yushchenko! Yushchenko!" The image of the "little father," of the fuhrer has been created. In Germany in the 1930s people also went into ecstasy at the sight of Hitler. He got the economy moving and ended unemployment.

The political and economic life of Ukraine is dominated on the one hand by "clans," - capitalist groupings linked to political structures, and criminal elements on the other. There are four clans and they are in constant competition, fighting for power and for appropriation of the public wealth.

1. The Donetsk clan is headed by the wealthiest citizen of Ukraine, Rinat Akhmetov. Viktor Yanukovich belongs to that clan. Akhmetov, as of today, is officially worth \$3.5 billion US. This clan uses the political cover of the "Party of Regions," whose leader is in practice Victor Yanukovich.
2. The Dnepropetrovsk clan is led by Viktor Pinchuk, who is the son-in-law of the outgoing president Leonid Kuchma. It uses the political cover of the "Labour Party of Ukraine", whose leader is Sergei Tigipko. V. Pinchuk is the determining influence in this party, though several months ago he announced he was leaving it and its leadership for exclusive involvement in business. It cannot be excluded that he will be a candidate for President of Ukraine, but he has not said when. If the present standoff leads to new elections for President, he might well be put forward as the candidate of that party.
3. The Kiev clan is led by Viktor Medvechuk, who is the head of the presidential administration, and Grigorii Surkis, who owns the Kiev soccer team "Dynamo." This clan includes the outgoing president Kuchma. Its political cover is

the "Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (united)." Until recently, Aleksandr Zinchenko worked in this team. Running on the party's electoral list, he became a deputy of the Supreme Rada (parliament) and then the Rada's Vice Chairperson. Then he switched to Viktor Yuushchenko's team and headed his election campaign.

4. Before Viktor Yushchenko appeared on the scene, the Western clan was unable to make a breakthrough to have real influence on the national scene. It was active mainly in the west. For that reason, the oligarchs who belong to that clan feel they were short-changed in the privatization of the nation's wealth. They feel this is unjust and they want to increase their share of the spoils.

Among their best-known oligarchs is the "sweet king of Ukraine," Petr Poroshenko, who until 2000 was a member of the "Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United)". He then left that organisation and became head of the "Party of Solidarity of Ukraine," with David Zhvaniya and Nikolai Martynenko. Aleksandr Oemlchenko, son of the mayor of Kiev, is close to that clan and collaborates with it.

Yuliya Timoshenko, a colleague of Pavel Lazarenko (who, as Prime Minister, stole millions and was indicted in the U.S.), works closely with Yushchenko. She is being sought by Interpol. Her best protection from criminal prosecution is political power.

All the above leads one to the conclusion that the main orientation of these people, if Yushchenko finally does win, will be a new division of wealth... in their favour. Of course, they oppose any political reform that would reduce the vast powers of the President.

All Ukrainian oligarchs got rich extremely quickly. Their pockets were filled with state property and the people's money. This was done through pillage, actively assisted by the state. Hyperinflation was unleashed in 1992, which was not an unforeseen consequence of other policies, in order to rob the people of "excessive" money. It also deprived enterprises of their working capital.

This resulted in what can only be termed economic genocide against the people. Demographic statistics fully bear this out. Working people had no chance of getting any share of the public wealth during the privatization process. For that you had to have state power and criminal links. During this process state power and the criminal world became fused.

All the oligarchs are parliamentary deputies and have immunity from criminal prosecution. This is another peculiarity of Ukraine: the oligarchic-criminal business class holds political office directly. Yushchenko is not an exception.

Yushchenko's bloc also includes a series of ultra-right nationalist parties that border on fascism. The most important of these is the "Freedom Party," that until 2003 was called the "Social-Nationalist Party of Ukraine." From that quarter one hears the slogans: "Ukraine for Ukrainians," "Ukraine from the Syan (in Poland) to the Don (in Russia)," "Kikes and Moscalites (Russians) Out Of Ukraine," "The Nation Above All Else," "Dictatorship of Natiocracy," "Russia - Enemy No. 1." etc.

One of the particularities of Ukraine's history is that it has never had broad mass movements. Ukraine always fought for national independence, with social and democratic demands taking a second place. The national domination took different forms in east and west.

The division was exacerbated in 1596, when the west adopted Catholicism and the east remained Orthodox. Ukraine was always divided between two states. The unification did not occur through the will of the people but through

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Stalin's methods. The west of Ukraine was justified in not accepting the method of unification, or more correctly, Stalin's policy of exile to forced labour camps, forced collectivization and the other criminal actions that accompanied unification.

As the expression goes, the past generations always dominate the living ones. Today, the western and eastern branches of the people are different in culture, mentality, political views and economic potential. In essence, they are different peoples. During the years since independence, they have voted differently, for different candidates.

The electoral campaigns of Yanukovich and Yushchenko were based on pitting east against west, and in doing so they exacerbated the division, instead of seeking ways to bring the two branches together.

This scenario was worked out in the West, by the U.S., which is interested in maintaining the divisions. Before 1991, Ukraine did not have the experience of statehood, and the nation still has to learn how to live in its own state. It will in all likelihood have to travel a sinuous path of defeats and victories, live through anti-popular as well as democratic regimes.

Violations of electoral law also took place in both east and west. In this there is little difference between the two teams. The main issue of the campaign was not whether the people's will would be violated or represented, though Ukraine has to put an end to the rule of gangsters.

Today Yushchenko is spending vast sums on demonstrations and picketing. This is undoubtedly American money. Students are being paid to participate in the demonstrations and to live in the tents. The catering is well organized. Imagine the cost of the tents and blankets alone, all of which were prepared in advance, in a well-planned scenario.

The victory of any of these candidates will not be a victory for the people. Either one will satisfy only a part of the people and not be accepted by the other. The only way out is new elections barring both of these people. Yushchenko rejects that idea. He hungers for his personal victory. The next step must be the introduction of a federal system in Ukraine.