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Introduction

Domestic and Foreign Factors in the 2004 Ukrainian Presidential Elections

Andreas Umland, National Taras Shevchenko University of Kyiv¹

As will become clear in this volume as well as in volume V of *Aspects of the Orange Revolution*, there is more than one way to understand the events that have become known as the 'Orange Revolution'. Most North American and European analysts (like me) interpret the actions that took place in Ukraine at the end of 2004 as a democratic breakthrough in a semi-pluralistic young state that had been under the spell of an authoritarian past. Viktor Yushchenko's election to the Ukrainian presidency in the re-run of the second round of the 2004 presidential election was, in this view, a shift of Ukraine's political orientation ushering the country into the club of 'normal,' Western-style democracies.

While there is a lot to be said for, and much has been uttered in the previous three volumes on, this version of the Orange Revolution, the events that have subsequently unfolded in Ukraine reveal that there might be other facets of this story that also deserve to be told. Ukraine's 'post-revolutionary' reality has turned out to be more complicated than had been sometimes predicted – in a way, reminding the familiar, inconsistent development of new revolutionary regimes after the classic revolutions of the 18th-20th centuries. Somewhat reminiscent, for instance, of the contradictory legacy of some

1 Originally, this introduction was meant to be a joint text by Ingmar Bredies, Valentin Yakushik and me. However, as Bredies' and Yakushik's draft was heavily cut, reformulated and expanded by me, I now appear here as the sole author. A number of elements though of the original text remained for which the input by Bredies and Yakushik is acknowledged.

national liberation movements across the globe is the ambivalent role of nationalism in the Orange camp which mainly consists of patriotic democrats with an untainted reputation, but also includes a couple of antisemites, like the former dissident Levko Lukyanenko.² The unpredictable effects of uprisings like the Orange Revolution – sometimes conceptualized, by political scientists, as real ‘revolutions’³ – is also vividly illustrated by the disillusioning aftermath of the Rose Revolution in Georgia and Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan.⁴ The events in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan in 2007, among others, can be seen as a glaring warning for how an allegedly pro-democratic new elite might be able to take advantage of Western naivety about the actual motivations and inclinations of supposedly ‘democratic revolutionaries’. In Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, it appears today, yet another, mass civic action, i.e. a second (or third, depending on how one counts) post-Soviet democratic ‘revolution,’ might be necessary to fully institutionalize some fundamentals of an, in Robert Dahl’s terms, functioning and meaningful polyarchy – i.e. of genuine power of the many.⁵

Those who were skeptical about the Ukrainian Orange Revolution – and one of this volume’s editors and contributors, Valentin Yakushik, was among them – feared not only a subversion of the cultural-civilizational basis of the society through far-reaching Westernization, but also a violation and infringement of the rule of law in Ukraine.⁶ As documented in Yakushik’s below memorandum prepared for Viktor Yanukovich’s Party of Regions’ lawsuit against the way in which the third round of the presidential elections was conducted, some thought that the ‘revolutionary’ situation itself could lead to changes in the consciousness of political decision makers and in Ukrainian society at large. They viewed the Orange Revolution as a real revolution that could bring Ukraine to a point of no return at which subsequent

2 ‘Antisemitic Ukrainian Politician Gets Presidential Medal,’ *FSU Monitor*, December 28, 2007, <http://www.fsmonitor.com/stories/122807Ukraine2.shtml>.

3 See volume VI of *Aspects of the Orange Revolution*.

4 Theodor Tudoroiu, ‘Rose, Orange, and Tulip: The failed post-Soviet revolutions,’ *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2007): 315-342.

5 Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1972).

6 Valentin Yakushik, “Politicheskie i tsivilizatsionnye aspekty ukrainiskoi revoliutsii 2004-2005 gg.,” *Politicheskaia ekspertiza*, no. 2 (2006): 289-298, <http://politex.info/content/view/196/40/>.

questions concerning the formation of a new Ukrainian polity would thereafter be justified by Orange ethics, i.e. on the basis of Ukraine's revolutionary experience, mention of which could be used to trump regular checks on the power of political decision makers. Some of those Ukrainians who opposed the Orange Revolution, like Yakushik, did so not only because they wanted Viktor Yanukovich to become President, but also because they believed that the memories of the revolution might tarnish their country, leaving societal cleavages that ordinary politics would be unable to overcome, in the aftermath.

This volume as well as the following collection of institutional election observation reports somewhat balances the different perspectives on the Orange Revolution as they also include selected statements with a critical view on it. While the previous three volumes as well as volume VI could all stand on their own as collections that comprehensively highlight certain aspects of the Orange Revolution, this volume IV as well as volume V should be seen in the context of the previous and following volumes. By themselves, volumes IV and V would not make useful reading. They constitute elaborations of, or supplements to, discussions that started in volumes I-III. This volume's first four papers, for instance, can be perceived as a debate that carries on the discussion of foreign actors in Ukraine in 2004 started by Andrew Wilson in the last paper of volume III.⁷

Much attention has been drawn to the international – some say 'geopolitical' – dimension of the 2004 presidential elections.⁸ Important papers by, among others, Taras Kuzio and Michael McFaul provide detailed analyses of the Russian and Western involvement into the Orange Revolution.⁹ Kyiv's Razumkov Centre has produced a fascinating study on

7 Andrew Wilson, 'Ukraine's Orange Revolution, NGOs and the Role of the West,' *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2006): 21-32.

8 E.g. Taras Kuzio, 'Ukrainian Foreign and Security Policy Since the Orange Revolution,' *The International Spectator*, no. 4 (2006): 1-18.

9 Taras Kuzio, 'Russian Policy toward Ukraine during the Elections,' *Demokratizatsiya*, vol. 13, no. 4 (2005): 491-517; Michael McFaul, 'Ukraine Imports Democracy: External Influences on the Orange Revolution,' *International Security*, vol. 32 no. 2 (2007): 45-83. I have been trying to get reprint permission for these incisive papers, yet without success. Fortunately, at least, McFaul's paper is now freely available on the WWW (http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/22086/International_Security-11-2007.pdf) and is recommended here explicitly as additional reading

Ukrainian think-tanks and their sponsors.¹⁰ Shortly before the event, I have listed and briefly analyzed, in a German language paper with an afterword by Astrid Sahn, the programs of a number of Western governmental and non-governmental organizations in Ukraine.¹¹ The previous three volumes of this project too touched upon, and the following two will be also dealing with, that subject.

In this volume's Part I, Iris Kempe and Iryna Solonenko first analyze the complex interaction between domestic and international affairs during the Orange Revolution. Assessing the promotion of interests carried out by various global players, they evaluate the behavior of Russia, on the one side, and of Western Europe/USA, on the other, as representing opposed approaches to foreign policy. The authors introduce different tools, levers and goals that the actors were pursuing. While Russia would have benefited, primarily, from maintaining the status quo and had, obviously, little interest in the promotion of Western standards of liberal democracy, the initiatives of the EU und US were aiming at strengthening democratic procedures and civil society in Ukraine, rather than to support particular candidates verbally or financially.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to turn a blind eye to certain interests of the West in this region and a mistake to associate *all* Western activity in this region only with the promotion of democracy and civil society *only*. Vladimir Frolov takes a skeptical – to say the least – look at the Western art of democracy promotion, especially Western support of free and fair elections, by what he calls 'democracy by remote control.'¹² In some ways following Frolov's argument, Valentin Yakushik, in an English translation of a

relevant for the below debate in Part I of this volume as well as for the matter of this entire project.

10 Razumkov Centre (ed.), 'Non-Governmental Think-Tanks in Ukraine: Their Present State and Prospects,' *National Security and Defense*, no. 10 (2003).

11 Andreas Umland, 'Westliche Förderprogramme in der Ukraine: Einblicke in die europäisch-nordamerikanische Unterstützung ukrainischer Reformbestrebungen seit 1991. Mit einem Nachwort von Astrid Sahn,' *Forschungsstelle Osteuropa Bremen: Arbeitspapiere und Materialien*, no. 63 (December 2004), <http://se2.isn.ch/serviceengine/FileContent?serviceID=10&fileid=D092944E-F352-D1A-CF4E-3CEFBC401E94&lng=de>. See also Wilfried Jilge, *Dialog mit Defiziten: Die deutsch-ukrainischen Kulturbeziehungen – Bestandsaufnahme und Empfehlungen*. ifa-Dokumente 2/2001 (Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen & Robert Bosch Stiftung 2001).

12 On this issue, see also the introduction to the whole project in volume I.

policy paper that he produced after the Orange Revolution at the behest of the Party of Regions, assesses the third round of the presidential election as an event that did not any longer present a real choice for Ukrainians given the inevitability of Yushchenko's, as he sees it, 'guided' presidential victory. He analyzes Ukraine's politics in the light of this, as he calls it, 'election without a choice'.

Matthias Brucker's paper concludes this section's debate about the role of foreign actors in the Orange Revolution with an analysis of the nature and tools of German assistance to Ukraine's democratization reviewing relevant transition theory and focusing on the FRG's well-known party foundations engaged in large scale support for political development around the globe. His contribution is of particular relevance within the context of the ongoing discussion, in the former Soviet Union, about the nature of the impact of (as is often alleged, self-serving) US democracy promotion programs already briefly mentioned in the introduction to this project in volume I. Brucker's analysis somewhat corrects this picture by drawing attention to the considerable activities of Germany in the former Soviet bloc. His paper illustrates that German non-governmental (yet, state-financed) foundations have been as much involved in helping to prepare Ukrainian civil society for the Orange Revolution as the various international, pan-European and Anglo-Saxon state agencies and NGOs represented in Kyiv. Brucker's analysis is important for the, in the introduction to volume I, briefly indicated Russian-Western debate on international democracy promotion in so far as Russia often claims that these programs solely further US national interests. Here it becomes clear that Germany – a country (apparently, not the least because of Putin's personal preferences) seen in Russia as a more benevolent and pro-Russian actor – is as much involved in supporting pluralistic politics and civil society abroad as the US. My own tentative findings of 2004, moreover, indicate that the summary impact of the European Union as an organization, of its member states, and of further European structures was, probably, altogether larger than the certainly considerable US-involvement in democracy promotion in Ukraine.¹³

13 Umland, 'Westliche Förderprogramme in der Ukraine.' See also Andreas Wittkowsky, *Die Unterstützung langsamer Transformationsländer: Ansätze und Erfahrungen in der Ukraine* (Bonn: DIE 1998); Stefanie Bailer, 'Förderung von

The second set of essays in this volume consists of reports from various election observers who look at the Orange Revolution from both the national and international perspectives. These reports can be read as appendices to both, the relevant research papers on the elections themselves in volumes I-III and VI, as well as the institutional elections reports collected in volume V. They are meant to add a bit of 'atmosphere' to the mostly dry texts of the other volumes. The participant observations of this section often express engagement instead of detached interpretation. In so far, they are supplements to the various relevant scholarly papers and institutional election reports of *Aspects of the Orange Revolution*. At the same time, they are, probably, the most fun reading of this project, and may even have the capacity to provide the reader with an understanding of the 2004 events which she/he otherwise would not get from mere study of the previous and following sections in this and the other volumes.

Jake Rudnitsky provides an impressionistic, yet detailed account of the campaign tactics used in the first round focusing here on the example of a 'technological' candidate in the presidential election campaign. What follows are four individual reports by Rory Finnin, Adriana Helbig, Paul and Tatiana Terdal, Peter Wittschorek, Hans-Jörg Schmedes and Adrianna Melnyk who served as official election observers for a variety of organizations. The same goes for Ingmar Bredies, Oxana Shevel and Volodymyr Bilyk who, in their three essays, pay special attention to the notorious irregularities that occurred in the Kirovohrad region. There, in Ukraine's 100th Electoral District, especially widespread ballot-stuffing and electoral manipulation characterized each of the three rounds of the presidential elections.

All in all, this volume aims less to make an individual contribution than to complement the previous and following volumes within *Aspects of the Orange Revolution* by way of providing – sometimes, highly – contradictory and emotional points of view on the events in Ukraine, in late 2004. Here, we have assembled not only scholarly analyses, but also impressionistic accounts some of which may be rejected by the reader. With these

Zivilgesellschaft und Drittem Sektor? Eine Untersuchung der Demokratieförderung der Europäischen Union in der Ukraine und ihrer gesellschaftlichen Wirkung,' in Markus Kaiser (ed.), *WeltWissen: Entwicklungszusammenarbeit in der Weltgesellschaft* (Bielefeld: transcript-Verlag 2003), 107-132.

contributions, we want to show how various scholarly analysts, political commentators, in- and outside observers as well as more or less active participants of the Ukrainian mass rebellion were able to interpret the reasons, course, nature and results of this celebrated uprising in radically different ways. This, we hope, will give the reader a better understanding of – and, perhaps, even a ‘feeling’ for – the tense atmosphere in Ukraine in 2004, and why the meaning of these events is still disputed today. The analyses, reports and comments might also indicate how the Orange Revolution’s assessment will continue to exert impact on the whole post-Soviet region,¹⁴ and on our perception of when and how democracies emerge.

14 E.g. Liliana Proskuryakova, ‘Worldwide Implications of the Orange Revolution,’ *Harvard International Review*, 2nd May 2007, <http://www.harvardir.org/articles/1305/>.