

## Case Study

### **Taras Kuzio: The Multi-Party System in Ukraine on the Eve of Elections: Identity Problems, Conflicts and Solutions**

The multi-party system in Ukraine will be surveyed in this study on the eve of the first truly free parliamentary elections on 27 March 1994. It will point to the slow growth of political reform and the nascent weakness of civil society and democratic parties. The emergence of a multi-party system in Ukraine is a relatively new phenomenon;<sup>1</sup> the majority of political parties were established during the period Spring 1990 – Spring 1991 after the March 1990 republican and local elections.<sup>2</sup> One author has divided the development of the Ukraine's multi-party system into three periods: 'pre-party' (mid-1988 – December 1989), 'multi-party' (Spring 1990 – August 1991) and 'post-communist parties' (August 1991 onwards).<sup>3</sup>

By January 1991 one newspaper wryly commented that, 'The past week is characterized first of all by the fact that no new political parties have been founded in Ukraine'.<sup>4</sup> Although Ukraine possesses a large number of political parties, in contrast to other post-communist countries such as Poland, Georgia

\* Articles in this series to follow in forthcoming issues include an article on Estonia by Andrus Park and a piece on Siberia by Grigorii V. Golosov.

<sup>1</sup> On political pluralism in Ukraine see *Molod Ukrainy*, 23 December 1990; *Kommunist Ukrainyj*, No. 12, 1990; *Kultura i Zhyttia*, 5 January 1991; *Visit z Ukrainy*, No. 15, 1991; *Literaturna Ukraina*, 20 June 1991; *PostPostup*, No. 6, 1991; *Volia*, No. 15 – 16, 1991; *Slovo*, May 1991; *Radyanska Ukraina*, 22 May 1991; *Samostijna Ukraina*, No. 29, July 1992 and *Uriadovyj Kurier*, No. 31, 31 July 1992. A round table of political parties was covered in *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, 30 April 1991. See also the surveys by Oleksiy Haran in *Zoloti Vorota*, No. 1, 1991, pp. 48 – 57 and Volodymyr Lytvyn in *Politohichni chytannia*, No. 1, 1992, pp. 62 – 101.

<sup>2</sup> On the period between 1985 – 1990 in Ukraine see two articles by the author, 'Ukraine under Gorbachev', *Uncaptive Minds*, 1, No. 3, September – October 1988, pp. 17 – 19 and 'Unofficial Groups and Publications in Ukraine', *Report on the USSR*, No. 47, 1989, pp. 10 – 21. See also the Introduction in Roman Solchanyk, (ed.), *Ukraine. From Chernobyl to Sovereignty. A Collection of Interviews*, London, Macmillan, 1992, pp. XIII – XXVI.

<sup>3</sup> See the article by Artur Bilous in *Suchasnist*, No. 6, June 1992, pp. 108 – 19.

<sup>4</sup> *News from Ukraine*, No. 1, 1991.

or the Russian Federation the total number is smaller, with only five being large and influential.<sup>5</sup>

The programmes of the parties are not on the whole very dissimilar,<sup>6</sup> and the parties were formed around a particular leader. They have failed to establish themselves in rural areas or small towns, and what can be called civil society exists only in Western Ukraine and Kiev. Parties are still relatively weak with limited appeal to the public (who are suspicious of the word 'party'), to young people in particular and to a meagre press. The two largest political parties are the Ukrainian Popular Movement (Rukh) and the former communists, now called the Socialist Party of the Ukraine, with a total membership of 80,000. The combined strength of non-communist political parties has never exceeded 35–40 per cent in opinion polls, and few are able as yet to establish a solid social base of support because of the lack of development of both civil society and a market economy.

Apathy is increasing and the voting public is already disillusioned with parliamentary politics after only one general and one local election in March 1990. The growing economic crisis and the failure of independence to bring the fruits of higher standards of living rapidly to the dinner table also play a role. Apathy and growing social discontent could lead to a growth of support for extreme left and right groups which look back to the 'good old days' of the pre-Gorbachev era and for a 'strong hand' to combat growing crime, unemployment and lack of discipline.

## BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The twin legacies of external domination and Soviet totalitarianism will play a major role in the slow development of Ukraine's multi-party system and civil

<sup>5</sup> On political parties in Ukraine see 'Partii i Politicheskaya Elita Ukrainyy', Moscow, *Postfactum and Interlegal*, No. 10; October 1991; Peter J. Potichnyj, 'The Multi-Party System in Ukraine', paper prepared for the conference on Communist Systems in Transition: Reform, Collapse, Retrenchment, McMaster University, 17–18 October 1991; Taras Kuzio, 'Political Parties in Ukraine', *Uncaptive Minds*, Vol. IV, No. 2 Summer 1991, pp. 67–73; and Roman Solchanyk, 'Ukraine: Political Reform and Political Change', *RFE/RL Research Report*, No. 21, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> The programmes are reprinted in A. H. Slyusarenko and M. V. Tomenko, *Novi politychni partii Ukrainy. Dovidnyk*, Kiev: Tovarystvo 'Znannya' Ukrainskoi RSR, 1990; and Oleksa Haran, (ed.), *Ukraina bahalopartiina. Programni dokumenty novykh partii*, Kiev: MP 'Pamiatky Ukrainy', 1991. Haran's introductory essay is expanded upon in *Vid stoorennia Rukhu do bahalopartiinosti*, Kiev: Znannia, 1992. On political thought in Ukraine see the article by Volodymyr Ruban in *Suchasnist*, No. 1, January 1992, pp. 90–106.

society.<sup>7</sup> These legacies provide Ukraine with a predicament far worse than that faced by the bulk of the colonies of the former Western powers. India, for example, the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the British empire, inherited the British model of parliamentary democracy with which to build the world's largest democracy.

Ukrainian territories, on the other hand, were divided between at least four external powers, a situation which did not end until the conclusion of the Second World War. The legacy of external domination left regional variations within the country, ranging from the more liberal traditions of Austrian rule in Galicia to repression and denationalization in Eastern Ukraine within the Tsarist Russian empire. The impact of Soviet totalitarianism, at its worst under Joseph Stalin in the 1930s, dealt an additional blow to the Eastern Ukrainian ethnos.<sup>8</sup>

It is, therefore, no coincidence that Western Ukraine, particularly the Galician region, has emerged from these legacies the least scathed and therefore, the best capable of taking advantage of the current situation. To all intents and purposes Western Ukraine can be compared to the Baltic Republics — in terms of the rapid reemergence of a civil society, the prewar generation who remember the pre-Soviet era and the influence of the diaspora in the transplantation of funds, political programmes and institutions that were destroyed in the USSR but kept alive in areas of Ukrainian settlement abroad.

Although Western Ukraine plays an important role within the political culture of independent Ukraine and contributes a higher proportion than its weight within the republic's population towards the leadership it still only accounts for twenty per cent. In Eastern and Southern Ukraine democratic traditions are weak, national consciousness is lower and anti-Russian sentiments milder or, in some regions, non-existent. In some areas (the coal- and steel-producing Donbas) the educated are in a small minority and there is therefore a concentration of extremist left- and right-wing groups which provide easy answers to an atomized industrial proletariat fearful of the market economy and instability. Other areas (Southern Ukraine) are primarily agricultural which makes it difficult for urban-based parties to establish themselves in a rural, conservative landscape.

The dilemma faced by the Ukrainian leadership was two-fold. On the one hand, the disintegration of the Soviet empire encouraged rapid and fundamental change, which the population welcomed. At the same time, the demise of Soviet totalitarianism undermined both the ability of post-Soviet elites to adopt radical policies and also the population's resilience to their effects. This has led to an inconsistent and contradictory policy-making process.

<sup>7</sup> See the new study by Alexander J. Motyl, *Dilemmas of Independence. Ukraine After Totalitarianism*, New York, Council on Foreign Relations, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive recent historical survey which includes the modern period see Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine. A History*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988.

Another factor peculiar to Ukraine within the former USSR is the lingering influence of national communism. Ukraine has a tradition of the revival of national communism during Soviet thaws (1920s, 1960s and late 1980s). The nationalist counter-elites were insufficiently strong to propel Ukraine towards independence, unlike those of the Baltic and Trans-Caucasian republics. At the same time, they were of sufficient magnitude to split the Communist Party into imperial and national factions, in contrast with Belarus and Central Asia. This lingering influence of the national communists has slowed the implementation of political and economic reform.

Can the evolutionary path lead to a break with the old system and progress towards reform? Possibly. But more than likely the former Soviet republics will travel through a period of authoritarianism, as in Russia, before they can establish fully fledged parliamentary democracies and market economies. Democracy by dictate, or the East Asian model, seems particularly likely at a time of growing economic crisis, weak political parties and embryonic civil society which provide a window of opportunity for authoritarian forces. Certainly, if Ukraine does not improve its security environment, including good relations with Russia, political and economic reform will continue to have a low priority.

## IDENTITY PROBLEMS, CONFLICTS AND SOLUTIONS

The character of Ukraine's multi-party system is such that 'the majority of the parties were formed not on principle, around some idea or world-view, but around a group which had taken the initiative, and then around a leader'.<sup>9</sup> The local nature of the parties means that they are often based only in the capital city and *oblast* centres. Only in Galicia do parties have branches at the local (*rayon*) level.<sup>10</sup> In autumn 1990 Levko Lukianenko, the then leader of the Ukrainian Republican Party (URP), complained that neither Rukh nor the URP had established branches at the *rayon* level: 'We democratic leaders are still not able to raise up five million from among the fifty-two million people of Ukraine'.<sup>11</sup>

Rural areas and small towns are therefore hardly touched by Ukraine's multi-party system and the party activists often live in, and work within, their own isolated circles. Although the Supreme Council of Ukraine has a number of factions, some of which are tied to party membership, there is little

<sup>9</sup> *Nezalezhnyj Ohliadach*, August – September 1991.

<sup>10</sup> On political parties in Galicia see the article by Evhen Boltarovich in *Respublikanets*, No. 2, November – December 1991, pp. 21 – 40.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from a text in the author's possession entitled 'Our Aspirations' by Levko Lukianenko. No date or place of publication.

recognition by the public of the activity of political parties in parliamentary struggles.<sup>12</sup> The limited access to the mass media and limited foreign links are also additional handicaps for political parties.<sup>13</sup> The rising apathy of young people means that the more politically active Western Ukrainian youth are likely to dominate politics among the young.<sup>14</sup>

Parliamentary factions are also barely organized, even that of the supposedly well-disciplined URP. Its representation in the Supreme Council has now shrunk to below ten. Nevertheless, disagreement amongst them is still common.<sup>15</sup> Overall, deputies, who are allowed to belong to up to two factions, do not usually vote on party lines (they were not, after all, elected as representatives of parties, which were established really only *after* the republican elections in March 1990). The largest faction, the 52 deputies claimed by the social-democratic/liberal New Ukraine bloc may occasionally assemble formally before a vote, but the decisions of such a caucus would only bear the character of recommendations.<sup>16</sup> Unlike in the Russian parliament, there is no formal system of state support for the parliamentary factions, which lack elementary office, secretarial and research facilities.

But, 'a multi-party system is not the same thing as democracy, it is only one of its component parts'.<sup>17</sup> The lack of a civil society associated with liberal democracies is a major problem facing the post-communist countries. Civil society, 'is a part of society which has a life of its own, which is distinctly different from the state, and which is largely autonomous from it',<sup>18</sup> and this still only exists in (Galician) Western Ukraine and the capital city Kiev. The right to private property, a middle class with its own business interests separate from those of the state, and plurality of autonomous spheres in religion, economics, culture and the intelligentsia are still absent. While civil society

<sup>12</sup> *Filosofska i Sotsiologichna Dumka*, No. 1, 1991, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Several parties have begun a campaign to broaden their access to a mass media still dominated by national communists, and to demand an independent television channel. See *Samostijna Ukraina*, No. 29, July 1992. See also the survey of viewing levels of Ukrainian television in *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 18 July 1992 and a critical survey of the state of Ukrainian television by Volodymyr Ruban in *PostPostup*, No. 28, 1992.

<sup>14</sup> *Politolohichni chytannia*, No. 1, 1991, p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> For example, the party leader Mykhailo Horyn abstained in the vote to censure the government on 7 July 1992, whilst most of his colleagues voted against. See *Vechirni Kyiv*, 9 July 1992.

<sup>16</sup> The New Ukraine leader, Volodymyr Filenko, urged his supporters to vote against the government in a vote of confidence on 7 July, but key members, such as the leader of the industrialists' lobby, Vasylyevych, and the Second Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Council of Ukraine, Vladimir Griniiov abstained. See *PostPostup*, No. 27, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> See *op. cit.*, footnote 6.

<sup>18</sup> Edward Shils, 'The Virtue of Civil Society', *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Winter 1991, p. 3.

requires that the state (or government) be limited in the scope of its activities, at the same time the state is expected to protect civil society and its necessary liberties.

Political parties in Ukraine are still unpopular among the public at large. The largest democratic political party, the URP, with still only 12,000 members, held its inaugural congress in April 1990. Levko Lukianenko, the then chairman of the URP, obtained only 4.49 per cent in the December 1991 presidential elections.

Although one must remain somewhat sceptical about opinion polls in Ukraine, because of their low professional standard and the fact that they largely ignore rural areas and small towns, nevertheless they can serve as general indicators. When polls have been conducted throughout Ukraine, the popularity of democratic groups has been seen to be low in areas such as the Crimea, and there has always been a distinct difference between areas such as Western-Central and Eastern-Southern Ukraine.<sup>19</sup>

Opinion polls conducted during the period 1990 – 92 have consistently shown that political parties have been unable to break through to achieve widespread popularity beyond 50 per cent. The two most popular groups during this period have remained movements, not political parties. In the first half of 1990 Rukh and the Greens (Green World Association and Green Party of the Ukraine) increased their support from 40 to 59 per cent — when the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) declined from 20 to 10.<sup>20</sup> During this period, after the republican elections and the organization of a democratic bloc within the Supreme Council of the Ukraine, Rukh's popularity increased dramatically. This coincided with a decline in the CPU's ratings. On the eve of the republican elections Rukh obtained high popularity ratings of over 50 per cent in Kiev.<sup>21</sup>

This was reflected in the rising popularity of non-communist leaders (Volodymyr Yavorivsky, Ivan Drach, Viacheslav Chornovil and others).<sup>22</sup> In contrast, undistinguished communist leaders, such as Volodymyr Ivashko and Stanislav Hurenko, were not able to compete with them.<sup>23</sup> The only communist leader who progressively increased his ratings during 1990 – 91 was the charismatic Leonid Kravchuk, who carved a niche in the political centre for 'sovereign communists', thus ensuring his success in the December 1991 presidential elections. Consequently, Kravchuk was the only communist leader who, like the democrats, increasingly obtained high popularity ratings during 1990 – 91.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 3 March 1991.

<sup>20</sup> *Ukrainian Press Agency*, 17 July 1990.

<sup>21</sup> *Nezavisimiya Gazeta*, 12 January 1991.

<sup>22</sup> *Vechirnyj Kiev*, 3 January 1990 and *News from Ukraine*, No. 40, 1990.

<sup>23</sup> *Zapovit*, No. 3, August 1990.

<sup>24</sup> *Holas Ukrainy*, 1 February and 9 April 1991.

A major problem revealed by opinion polls is that most Ukrainians still did not know the programmes of the political parties, even after the presidential elections.<sup>25</sup> Although Rukh and the Greens remained the most popular groups, Rukh also attracted a large negative rating in Eastern and Southern Ukraine. In January of this year another poll confirmed that the only group with more than a 50 per cent popularity rating remained the Greens (51 per cent). Rukh received 34 per cent of the vote in contrast to the URP with only 12 per cent.<sup>26</sup> Among young people this was confirmed by a poll conducted on the eve of the December 1991 presidential elections where movements (Rukh, Greens and the Students) obtained by far the largest ratings. Only 2.9 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively of young people questioned 'actively supported' the URP and the Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine (PDRU).<sup>27</sup>

In Ukraine *no* political party has yet reached the stage of a mass party. The parties still remain small in terms of membership, lacking a social base and attempting to map out an ideological profile whilst still undertaking to deal with daily problems (agitation for/against referenda and union treaties, dealing with the economic crisis, etc.). The results of the various elections and referenda of 1990–91 also showed that all the non-communist political parties could command jointly no more than 25–33 per cent of the all-Ukrainian vote.<sup>28</sup>

Internal squabbling within Rukh in 1992 turned many former supporters away from the democratic camp and from politics.<sup>29</sup> The numbers declaring support for individuals or claiming to be non-party, on the other hand, had risen from 17 per cent to 42 per cent in the same period. Were elections to be held in the near future, the Ukraine would undoubtedly therefore gain the same kind of divided parliament as that produced by the Polish elections of 1991.

Members of the political parties often lack party discipline, in particular within the Supreme Council of the Ukraine where deputies do not vote along party political lines. During the December 1991 presidential elections the DPU supported Volodymyr Pylypchuk's candidacy, whilst the PDRU supported Ihor Yukhnovskyj. Neither of these candidates was a member of either the DPU or PDRU. Yet members of these two parties did stand as candidates — although supported by other groups, notably Volodymyr Yavorivskyj as a member of the DPU and Volodymyr Hryniiov as a member of the PDRU. Meanwhile these elections showed that only the URP and PDRU had the organizational ability to ensure that their candidates obtained the necessary 100,000 signatures allowing them to stand as candidates.<sup>30</sup> The candidates proposed by the DPU, the

<sup>25</sup> *Vechirnyj Kiev*, 3 December 1991 and *Suchasnist*, No. 6, June 1992, p. 114.

<sup>26</sup> *Radio Kiev*, 23 January 1992.

<sup>27</sup> *Zelenyj Svit*, No. 1, January 1992.

<sup>28</sup> *Narodna Hazeta*, No. 12, April 1992.

<sup>29</sup> *Radio Ukraine*, 6 September, 1992.

<sup>30</sup> *Vechirnyj Kiev*, 3 December 1991.

Greens and the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) failed to obtain the required minimum number of signatures.

### POLITICAL CAMPS

Many of the political organizations are less like parties and more like 'political camps' and 'movements of minds'.<sup>31</sup> Public surveys still show that no single political party would be able to obtain more than 6–8 per cent of the vote. The largest number of votes would go to independents and non-party candidates, many of whom might well be members of the old nomenklatura who still control the commanding heights of the Ukrainian society and economy. This, in the view of the leading Ukrainian analyst Mykola Riabchuk, is the main reason why Leonid Kravchuk is in no rush to join any political party, including the SPU.<sup>32</sup> President Kravchuk's *partia vlada* (literally the 'party of power' of 'sovereign communists' who *de facto* rule the Ukraine) has deliberately not been formally acknowledged as a political party or movement in order not to become the focus of attention of anti-communist groups, and also because of public apathy towards parties (unlike in Romania where similar former communists constituted the National Salvation Front).

The minimum number of members required for the official registration of a republican political party was 3,000. But the law also required that the future party should submit the full names, dates of birth and addresses of each member. This was clearly a disincentive to register a party because it was feared that the information would be passed to the KGB.<sup>33</sup> In September 1991, when the minimum number of members required for official registration was lowered from 3,000 to 300, only five parties had achieved the original target (URP, PDRU, DPU, GPU, PDPU and the CPU, before it was subsequently banned). Whilst the total number of members of political parties (excluding the neo-communist SPU) is no more than 30,000.<sup>34</sup>

One of the largest political parties in Ukraine is still, ironically, the Communist Party. Now re-named the SPU with 29,000 members, it held its inaugural congress in October 1991.<sup>35</sup> Although the SPU is the largest party and the main successor to the Communist Party of the Ukraine, which was

<sup>31</sup> See S. Fish, 'The Emergence of Independent Associations and the Transformation of Russian Political Society', *The Journal of Communist Studies*, Vol. 77, No. 3, September 1991, p. 321.

<sup>32</sup> *Rada*, 12 June 1992.

<sup>33</sup> *Holos Ukrainy*, 5 March 1991. See also *Moloda Hvardiia*, 12 March 1991.

<sup>34</sup> *Suchasnist*, No. 6, June 1992, p. 109.

<sup>35</sup> Rukh is the largest political party with 50,000 members and the SPU is second with 29,000. See Marta Kolomeyets, 'Fourth Congress Transforms Rukh into Party, Re-elects Chornovil', *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 13 December 1992.



banned for supporting the coup d'état on 30 August 1991,<sup>36</sup> nevertheless it has managed to attract only a small proportion of the membership of 2,500,000 which it had claimed prior to the coup d'état (even this claim is not substantiated, but based largely on the circulation of old Communist Party cards).<sup>37</sup> The Democratic Platform of the CPU, later re-named the UPDR, also managed to attract only 2–3,000 members from the then three million membership of the CPU when it seceded from it in mid-1990. These former members of the CPU who rejoined successor groups include the 'Leninist' Gorbachev-style SPU and the 'Stalinist' hardline Communist Party-Bolsheviks of Ukraine. The national communists, led by the powerful chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament, Ivan Pliushch, established in April 1993 the Labour Congress of Ukraine which is likely to ally itself with the CNDF in the next elections.

Although the programmes of political parties in Ukraine are not radically different, the differences being of priorities rather than substance, nevertheless there was little indication that the number of parties would decline as they amalgamated horizontally and vertically into traditional Western-style blocs (centre-left, centre and centre-right).<sup>38</sup> Yet, the majority of the political parties adhere to certain collective objectives, such as independence, parliamentary democracy and a market economy. Two blocs were created in 1992: New Ukraine and the Congress of National Democratic Forces (CNDF). Within the CNDF the two largest parties, the URP and DPU, have announced their intention to unite in 1993.<sup>39</sup> The Ukrainian Popular Movement (Rukh) was forced to become a political party at its fourth congress in early December 1992,<sup>40</sup> because the new Law on Public Associations only allows parties (not movements) to put forward candidates in elections.<sup>41</sup> The two small social democratic parties, which split into 'socialist' and 'social-democratic' factions at their inaugural congress in May 1990 re-united in November 1992.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>36</sup> According to new evidence provided by the Procurators' Office, the CPU was not involved in the coup d'état. See *Pravda Ukrainy*, 27 October 1992.

<sup>37</sup> The figure of 2,500,000 was given in *Vechirnyj Kiev*, 17 June 1991 and represented a one million reduction on the total figure on the eve of the Gorbachev era. Oleksander Moroz believed that only 200,000 members would rejoin if the CPU were to be legalized again (*Postpostup*, No. 28, 1992). See also the article by Taras Kuzio, 'The Communist Party of Ukraine in Crisis', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 1991.

<sup>38</sup> See *Visti z Ukrainy*, No. 39, 1991 and Taras Kuzio, 'Monopoliiya i Opozyttsiya. Skilky politychnykh partii potrebuye Ukraina?', *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, 4 June, *Chas, Pozapartiynna Hazeta Bukovyny*, No. 28, and *Slovo*, No. 11, 1991.

<sup>39</sup> *Holos Ukrainy*, 15 December 1992.

<sup>40</sup> On the congress see *Za Vilnu Ukrainu*, 8 December 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Rukh is now the largest political party in Ukraine with 50,000 members. Of these half are reportedly in Western Ukraine. See *Molod Ukrainy*, 13 November 1992.

<sup>42</sup> *Radio Ukraine*, 28 November 1992.

The reasons for so many political parties are their narrower ideological base, the banning of factions and the lower level of political culture which is reflected in a lack of tolerance of other people's viewpoints. Indeed, this is one recurring complaint about the behaviour of deputies.<sup>43</sup> This, in turn, leads to splits and quarrels when no room for compromise over different strategies can be found within one party or movement. Recent examples of this are the third Rukh congress in February – March 1992, the third URP congress in April 1992 and the third congress of the PDRU in May and September 1992.

### LEADERSHIP OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

Many of the political parties have leaders from among former prisoners of conscience and the literary intelligentsia. This is to be found in particular within the URP and DPU, the two main organizers of Rukh.

In the case of the Ukraine the administrative and management intelligentsia changed only after the August 1991 coup d'état when Leonid Kravchuk was able to win to the cause of independence a large section of the previously indifferent or hostile industrial, agricultural and technical elites.<sup>44</sup> But the lack of a wide social base for social-liberalism, the ideology of the New Ukraine Bloc which is the flagship for economic reform, is a major hindrance to the development of parties such as the PDRU. President Kravchuk has increasingly shown himself unwilling to introduce radical economic reform but supports the old nomenklatura which is still in place within the cabinet of ministers.<sup>45</sup>

Traditional Western understandings of 'Left' and 'Right', although used later in this article to survey the current Ukrainian multi-party system, are not necessarily always applicable to post-communist countries such as Ukraine. Nuclear power has been highly unpopular among all parties in Ukraine since the Chernobyl nuclear disaster of April 1986. There has been a change since the Ukraine became independent. The fear of dependence upon Russian oil and gas has pushed some parties in the direction of being more favourable to nuclear power. The flag-bearers of radical economic reform in Ukraine are, ironically, the centre and centre-left — not the centre-right (again, unlike in the West). Centre and centre-left groups united in the New Ukraine bloc regard economic reform as a higher priority than national symbols, armed forces or a

<sup>43</sup> *Filosofska i Sotsiologichna Dumka*, No. 1, 1991, pp. 16–17.

<sup>44</sup> On the attitude of businessmen in Ukraine towards political parties see *Ukraina Business*, No. 36, September 1991.

<sup>45</sup> On the problems of economic reform see my booklet on *Ukraine. The Unfinished Revolution*, European Security Studies 16, London, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, October 1992.

potential external threat to Ukrainian independence (the preoccupation of the centre-right).<sup>46</sup>

Another reason for this difference is the geographic location of these parties. The centre-left is stronger in Eastern Ukraine,<sup>47</sup> and the ethnic composition of centre-left parties includes a large number of Russians and Jews. The centre-left is also distrusted by a large proportion of Ukraine's ruling elite (both the former 'sovereign communists' grouped around President Kravchuk and the Congress of National Democratic Forces) because of their previous support for Soviet confederalism and their current support for a federal structure for the Ukraine.<sup>48</sup>

Ukrainian history also weighs heavily on the consciousness of today's ruling elite which blames the socialist inclinations of the Ukrainian independent state of 1917–21 for its defeat, especially its failure to give adequate priority to establishing Ukrainian armed forces. This explains the priority given to establishing separate armed forces by President Kravchuk (as well as his hostility towards a federalized state) which are strong inducements for those with similar priorities (such as the Congress of National-Democratic Forces) to cooperate with 'sovereign communists'.

Another peculiarity of Ukraine's multi-party system is the weakness of extremist political tendencies, clearly seen in the December 1991 presidential elections. The lack of popularity of both the extreme left and extreme right, as well as the absence of such figures as Russia's Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the so-called Liberal Democratic Party of the Soviet Union, plus the inability of *Pamiat* to establish branches in Ukraine all testify to a more stable and conservative public than in Russia. Yury Shukhevych, leader of the Ukrainian National Assembly, failed to register the required 100,000 signatures to stand in the presidential elections. No one stood on the extreme left during those same elections.

The growing economic and political crisis, together with outstanding conflicts with Russia and lack of direction at the leadership level, are likely to lead to a growth in influence of the extreme left and right in the next elections. Uneasiness about the growth in popularity of the paramilitary arm of the Ukrainian National Assembly could lead to its being banned.

In an opinion poll conducted in Ukraine, Russia and Lithuania after the March 1990 republican and local elections, Ukrainians came second only to

<sup>46</sup> In the former USSR the 'Left' was associated with radicalism, whereas the 'Right' was described as the Stalinist (or conservative) wing of the Communist Party.

<sup>47</sup> *Moloda Halychyna*, 14 March 1991 and *Ukrainski Visti* (Detroit), 28 April 1991.

<sup>48</sup> See the division of Ukrainian parties between 'confederalists', 'independists' and 'non-conformist independists' described in *PostPostup*, No. 6, 1991.

Russians in Lithuania in the degree of their conservatism.<sup>49</sup> This Ukrainian conservatism goes hand in hand with the high degree of religious devotion in the republic and it also served Leonid Kravchuk well in the presidential elections where a vote for him was one for a man of the 'centre', somebody who would not be too radical either in economic or ethnic affairs, able to please most people, most of the time.<sup>50</sup> During the course of 1991, as the situation deteriorated within the USSR, according to opinion polls public opinion was moving towards the centre.<sup>51</sup> During the August 1991 coup d'état more Ukrainians were opposed to holding a general strike than in favour; Leonid Kravchuk's cautious response to the coup d'état therefore, ironically, increased his popularity with the man in the street.<sup>52</sup>

The majority of political parties have still not pointed to their social base and constituencies. The exceptions are the Peasant Democratic Party of Ukraine (private farmers and peasants), Ukrainian People's Democratic Party (bourgeoisie), Liberal Democratic Party of Ukraine and Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine (entrepreneurs and new businessmen).<sup>53</sup>

The lack of substantial economic reforms, unlike developments in Russia, has prevented the growth of a lobby for the still minuscule private sector. An exception is the Eastern Ukrainian-based Liberal Party which is led by the successful businessman, Igor Mirkulov. New Ukraine, the main political bloc at the forefront in promoting a faster pace of economic reform is unpopular in Western Ukraine where the public is more in favour of radical reform.

## THE YOUTH

The multi-party system in Ukraine is also characterized by a largely indifferent youth, cynically disposed towards politics, and lacking idealism. Due to generational and other reasons, young people are generally not attracted into

<sup>49</sup> See A. H. Miller, W. M. Reisinger and V. L. Hesli, 'Public Support for New Institutions in Russia, the Ukraine and Lithuania', *Journal of Soviet Nationalities*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Winter 1990-1991, pp. 87-92.

<sup>50</sup> On the Kravchuk phenomenon see the article by Taras Kuzio comparing Kravchuk to Mikhail Gorbachev in *Narodna Hazeta*, March 1992. See also *Neskorena Natsiya*, No. 10, June 1992 and Taras Kuzio, 'Leonid Kravchuk: Patriot or Placeman?', *Soviet Analyst*, 19 June 1991; 'Kravchuk and Ukrainian Communism', *Soviet Analyst*, January 1992 and 'The Cynical Betrayal of Democracy in Ukraine', *Soviet Analyst*, June-August 1992.

<sup>51</sup> *Filosofska i Sotsiologichna Dumka*, No. 6, 1991, p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Ukrainskyi Ohiadach*, No. 7, 1992.

<sup>53</sup> See A. H. Sliusarenko and M. B. Tomenko, 'On the problem of the classification of new political parties of Ukraine', *Filosofska i Sotsiologichna Dumka*, No. 5, 1992, p. 5 and *Politolohichni chytannia*, No. 1, 1992, p. 103.

political parties, and the multi-party system is characterized by a 'revolution of the middle aged'.<sup>54</sup> Young people may find their path within the party blocked by the middle generation or they may be simply indifferent to politics — a legacy of decades of communist totalitarianism. Youth groups, the two largest of which are the Union of Ukrainian Students and the Plast Scouts (who are politically neutral, although anti-communist), have only 3–4,000 members each whilst the integral nationalistic Association of Ukrainian Youth has only one hundred members. Student apathy is on the rise, a major reason being the declining socio-economic conditions which give students little free time to dabble in politics.<sup>55</sup>

In a big survey of youth attitudes in November–December 1991 apathy and lack of interest were shown to have increased over the course of the year.<sup>56</sup> This depoliticization of youth was reflected in their lack of orientation and loss of authority. Only half of those asked were ready to, or could, give their views on political groups. At least half said that they would prefer to vote for an independent candidate, rather than someone from a political party. Rukh's popularity declined 12 per cent over the course of the year (with the greatest decline registered by the Komsomol and the Communists). Ironically, more Russian youth in the Ukraine would vote for representatives of Ukrainian youth groups than would the Ukrainian youth. The most popular groups were moderate and centrist groups, such as the Greens and PDRU, as opposed to the radicals (URP or integral nationalists).

## LACK OF INTELLIGENTSIA

A drawback for Ukraine's multi-party system is the low level of intellectuals' membership. This is reflected in the low quality, or absence, of party political newspapers. The only two groups who ever published a large number of *samizdat* publications were Rukh and the URP, which have now been legalized and registered as official publications.<sup>57</sup> By 1992 the only *samizdat* publications still appearing were those of the nationalist right. The democratic press had always been more popular with those with higher education, that is the intelligentsia.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *op. cit.*, footnote 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Radio Ukraine*, 5 September 1992.

<sup>56</sup> *Politolohichni chyttania*, No. 1, 1992, pp. 58–61.

<sup>57</sup> See my articles: 'Independent (Samizdat) Press in Ukraine Under Gorbachev', *Soviet Analyst*, No. 19 (17,18), 29 August and 13 September 1990 and 'Overview — Independent Press in Ukraine under Gorbachev', *The Ukrainian Weekly*, No. 23, 30 September and 7 October 1990.

<sup>58</sup> *Filosofska i Sotsiologichna Dumka*, No. 6, 1991, p. 25.

The poor quality of party political newspapers, such as those published by the URP, is a perennial problem and alienates potential new members from among the intelligentsia. Other parties with a greater number of intellectual members, such as the DPU and PDRU, publish nothing, because of the absence of strong leaders to guide them and the involvement of the leadership in the affairs of state and government, which leaves little time for party political matters.<sup>39</sup> *Zelenyj Soi*, the organ since 1990 of the Green World Association and Green Party of Ukraine, is under threat. The high cost of newsprint, available only in the Russian Federation, means that the government-controlled press is able to compete unfairly with the independent or political party press, because it receives state-subsidized newsprint.

No Ukrainian political party or movement ever launched a Russian-language publication, such as the Latvian Popular Front's *Atmoda*, despite the large Russian minority in the republic. The dissemination of pro-Rukh views among the Russian-speaking inhabitants of the Ukraine was therefore left to official newspapers such as *Komsomolskaya Znamia* (since January 1992 re-named *Nezavisimost*). Today *Nezavisimost* has *de facto* become one of the main newspapers opposing President Kravchuk and the government, and is a strong ally of New Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

Even Ukrainian official newspapers and journals are regarded as inferior in comparison with their Moscow counterparts. This is caused by the earlier integration of numerous Ukrainian administrators and intellectuals into the Soviet system as 'younger brothers' outside the republic, and the destruction of civil society and the nationally conscious intelligentsia in Central and Eastern Ukraine. In addition, Ukraine and Belorus were subjected to a high degree of 'russification' during the Brezhnev era.

Finally, the banning of the CPU removed from the political scene in Ukraine the main antagonist and rallying point for the disparate parties and movements that had grown up during the Gorbachev years. The disappearance of the CPU led to a large number of internal debates within the Ukraine's multi-party system over the question 'Quo Vadis?': in particular, whether to cooperate with President Leonid Kravchuk and how to alter their programmes after obtaining their main objective — state independence. The question of whether or not to cooperate with 'sovereign communists' has divided the URP, Rukh and the former parliamentary opposition People's Council.

Prior to the August 1991 coup d'état, political parties in Ukraine divided the world into two categories — 'black' and 'white' or 'ours' and 'theirs'. This world-view had to change after the banning of the CPU, and Oleksander

<sup>39</sup> *Ohliadach*, No. 6, 1991.

<sup>40</sup> See Viacheslav Chornovil's complimentary words about the newspaper in his long interview in *Nezavisimost*, 31 July 1992.

Moroz, leader of the SPU, has said that communists have deliberately not established a new parliamentary faction precisely to prevent this change.<sup>61</sup> The Ukrainian multi-party system has moved from an 'extreme confrontation (communism-anticommunism) to multi-variety', with the 'sovereign communists' attempting to occupy the centre ground between the New Ukraine Bloc (who accuse them of being too 'nationalistic') and national democrats (who would like them to be more 'nationalistic').<sup>62</sup>

### THE PRESENT POLITICAL SPECTRUM

By autumn 1992 the political spectrum had stabilized after the realignments which occurred following the referendum and presidential elections of December 1991. Five distinct blocs emerged: revived Communists united in the Labour Ukraine bloc, New Ukraine, Rukh, Congress of National Democratic Forces and Ukrainian National Assembly. The parliamentary elections look set to be a four-sided contest between the extreme Left (Labour Ukraine), Ukrainian National Assembly, New Ukraine-Rukh, Labour Congress-Congress of National Democratic Forces.

Although most political parties or groups have therefore now found their place within the political spectrum, nevertheless at least one party — The Peasant Democratic Party of Ukraine — is unable to decide if it belongs to the integral nationalist, to the anti-communist/President Kravchuk Rukh-New Ukraine bloc or to the pro-Kravchuk Congress of National Democratic Forces.

Claimed membership figures are given in brackets. If these figures are not available approximate estimates are provided and are marked by an asterisk:

*Extreme Left (Marxist-Communist)*: Socialist Party of Ukraine (29,000),<sup>63</sup> League of Crimean Communists (10,000),<sup>64</sup> Peasant Party of Ukraine (1,600,000),<sup>65</sup> Party of Bolshevik-Communists of the Ukraine.

*Centre-Left (social-democratic)*: United Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (1,000),<sup>66</sup> Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (1,300),<sup>67</sup> Party of Democratic

<sup>61</sup> See Moroz's interview in *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 7–8, July–August 1992.

<sup>62</sup> op. cit., footnote 16, pp. 105–06.

<sup>63</sup> *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 13 December 1992. See also Andrew Wilson, 'Communist Revivalists?', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 5, May 1992 and Evhen Balcerowycz, 'The Socialist Party of Ukraine', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 9, September 1992.

<sup>64</sup> *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 11 August 1992.

<sup>65</sup> *Uriadovyi Kurier*, No. 31, 31 July 1992. These figures are highly inflated based, as they are, upon the former Peasant Union.

<sup>66</sup> *Moloda Hvardiia*, 12 March 1991.

<sup>67</sup> *Radianska Ukraina*, 13 April 1991.

# Panorama of Political Parties and Movements in Ukraine

Communist	Centre-Left (Democratic)	Centre	Centre-Right (National Democratic)	Authoritarian Nationalist
SPU	Socialist USDPU	Rukh Social-Democratic SDPU GPU, GWA PDRU	Liberal LUU, LDPU, LPU PDRU, DPU,	Moderate Extreme AUY FUSI
LCC			Memorial Christian DPU	SNPU UNRP UNU UNA
CPBU			URP, UCDDP, UUS, Prosvita	
GPU			Anti-Commun. UNP UPDP UNCP UCRP UPDP	
<p><b>Note:</b> GPU was banned in August 1991 and reinstated in October 1993</p>				
<p><b>Note:</b> USDPU-SDPU to merge PDRU straddles Social-Democratic/Liberal Sections</p>				
<p><b>Note:</b> DPU-URP to merge</p>				
<p><b>Note:</b> UNP and U People's DP merged in early 1992 to form UNCP</p>				
<p><b>New Ukraine</b></p>				
<p>Labour Ukraine</p>		<p>Rukh</p>		
<p><b>Congress National Democratic Forces Labour Congress of Ukraine</b></p>				
<p><b>Congress of Nationalists (with the help of émigré Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists Bandera faction OUNb)</b></p>				
<p><b>Ukrainian National Assembly</b></p>				



Revival of Ukraine (3,000\*),<sup>66</sup> Green Party of Ukraine (7,000\*), Anarchist-Syndacalst Confederation of Ukraine.<sup>69</sup>

*Centre:* President Kravchuk and the *partia vlada*, Ukrainian Popular Movement — Rukh (50,000),<sup>70</sup> New Ukraine (30,000), Liberal-Democratic Party of Ukraine (320),<sup>71</sup> Liberal Party of Ukraine (30,000),<sup>72</sup> Constitutional Democratic Party of Ukraine, Liberal Union of Ukraine, Third Republic, Memorial.

*Centre-Right (national-democrats):* Ukrainian Republican Party (12,000),<sup>73</sup> Democratic Party of Ukraine (3,000),<sup>74</sup> Peasant Democratic Party of Ukraine, Christian Democratic Party of Ukraine, Ukrainian Christian Democratic Party, Ukrainian National Conservative Party, Ukrainian Conservative Republican Party, Union of Ukrainian Students (3,000\*); Ukrainian Language Society 'Prosvita'.

*Extreme Right (national-radicals/integral nationalists):* Federation for Ukrainian State Independence (1000), Ukrainian National Assembly (16,000),<sup>75</sup> Ukrainian Nationalist Union, Ukrainian National Radical Party, Social National Party of Ukraine, Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists.

*Membership of Blocs:*

*New Ukraine* — Liberal Democratic Party of Ukraine, Green Party of Ukraine, Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, United Social Democratic Party of Ukraine, Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine, Constitutional Democratic Party of Ukraine.

*Rukh* — no party membership exists, although a large number of political parties and groups supported the coalition 'Independent Ukraine — New Parliament' established in July 1992 which attempted to collect three million signatures to hold a referendum on the dissolution of parliament. Since December 1992 Rukh has become a political party.

*Congress of National Democratic Forces* — Ukrainian Republican Party, Democratic Party of Ukraine, Ukrainian Christian Democratic Party, Peasant Democratic Party of Ukraine, Union of Ukrainian Students, Ukrainian Language Society 'Prosvita'.

<sup>66</sup> *Narodna Hazeta*, No. 35, September 1992. See also Andrew Wilson and Taras Kuzio, 'Rukh Becomes "Constructive Opposition" to the President', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1992.

<sup>69</sup> On internal divisions within the PDRU see *PostPostup*, No. 32, 1992.

<sup>70</sup> *Holas Ukrainy*, 1 July 1992. See also ' "New Ukraine" Bloc Formed to Campaign for Radical Economic Reform', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 1992.

<sup>71</sup> *Uriadovyi Kurier*, No. 33, 14 August 1992. This figure is probably highly inflated.

<sup>72</sup> *Demokratychna Ukraina*, 30 September 1992. This figure seems highly inflated.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew Wilson, 'Ukrainian Republican Party (URP) Holds Third Congress', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 6, June 1992.

<sup>74</sup> *Holas Ukrainy*, 15 December 1992.

<sup>75</sup> *Vechirnyi Kiev*, 14 May 1992.

*Ukrainian National Assembly* — Ukrainian Nationalist Union, other small nationalist groups.

*Attitudes Towards 'Sovereign Communists' and President Kravchuk:*

Anti: Socialist Party of Ukraine, New Ukraine, Rukh, Ukrainian Republican Conservative Party, Ukrainian National Conservative Party, [Federation for Ukrainian State Independence;]

Ambivalent (depends on specific policies): Peasant Democratic Party of Ukraine, Ukrainian Christian Democratic Party, Union of Ukrainian Students, Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists.

In favour: Congress of National Democratic Forces.

*Attitudes towards Federalization of the Ukraine:*

In favour: Socialist Party of Ukraine, New Ukraine.

Ambivalent: Rukh.

Anti: President Kravchuk and the *partia vlada*, Congress of National Democratic Forces, Ukrainian National Assembly, Federation for Ukrainian State Independence.

## CONCLUSIONS

The multi-party system in the Ukraine is currently undergoing both an identity crisis and a reorganization.<sup>76</sup> To some extent the 'opposition' has been removed from the political arena, although the SPU have now officially announced their 'opposition' to President Kravchuk and the government. The other main opposition to President Kravchuk is Rukh and New Ukraine.

On the eve of the March 1994 elections, President Kravchuk's popularity has plummeted to a record low of 10–15 per cent in every sphere (patriotic, economic, etc) and in each region of the country. This is in marked contrast to President Yeltsin in Russia, and due in part to the lack of deep convictions displayed by President Kravchuk.

The Ukrainian case is unique within the former Soviet Union. In the Baltic republics the level of national consciousness and public activism allowed democratic parties to achieve independence without the need for an alliance with national communists. In Central Asia the national communists are opposed to independence, suppress democratic (pro-independence) groups and are in favour of a confederation with Russia. In Ukraine, on the other hand, democratic and pro-independence groups and parties were never able to establish a mass movement which covered the entire republic or to break through the fifty per cent popularity mark. They therefore had little choice but

<sup>76</sup> See Volodymyr Ruban, 'Whatever Happened to the Opposition? The Growing Threat of Authoritarianism in Ukraine', *Ukrainian Reporter*, Vol. 2, No. 2, February 1992 and his large article in *PostPostup*, No. 34, 1992.

to forge an uneasy alliance with the national communists, led by Leonid Kravchuk, in order to achieve their goal of independence. This is likely to slow the evolution towards a fully-fledged democratic system in Ukraine, in contrast to the Russian Federation or the Baltic Republics.

Political and economic reform has been slow and much valuable time was wasted in 1992–93 — factors which will have a marked impact in the March 1994 elections. Some of the leaders of the opposition have been given ministerial posts which are either politically insignificant (ecology, culture, education), or intended to obtain emigré support (Levko Lukianenko as ambassador to Canada) or smoke-screens to hide President Kravchuk's hostility towards market economic reform (Volodymyr Lanavoi, former deputy prime minister and economics minister). Others were brought into the former presidential council or appointed presidential advisers.

These trends of apathy and scepticism are particularly evident among the youth — the main supporters of democratic groups, and this perhaps represents the main reason why the SPU could more readily count upon the faithful of the older generation to fill its ranks so quickly and thereby reassert itself as one of Ukraine's largest political parties. New by-elections to fill vacant parliamentary seats in November and December 1992 failed to attract the minimum fifty per cent of voters required to make them legal, because of widespread public apathy. Candidates from democratic parties obtained the lowest number of votes. The highest were given to SPU candidates, a number of whom were elected, and to candidates representing UNA, that is the extreme left and right respectively. The worsening economic crisis, hyper-inflation and projected mass unemployment are likely to accentuate these trends and make it even more difficult to establish a civil society and multi-party parliamentary system. The return of the communists to power in elections in Lithuania in October 1992 as well as the continuing strength of the national communists in Moldavia and the Trans-Caucasus show the difficulties and hurdles that still lie ahead. The *ancien régime* in the former USSR is more deeply entrenched than in Central Europe (with the notable exceptions of Romania and Serbia) where it was imposed from outside. But even there national communists are in power in Slovakia, Croatia and Slovenia while democratic groups are under strong pressure in Bulgaria. There seem to be two paths that post-communist Soviet republics can take — either a slow, unsure and tortuous one or the 'big bang' break with communism (as in Russia, for instance). Neither path is free of the dangers of authoritarianism and instability for Ukraine and other post-Communist Countries.