

# We Are All Revolutionaries Now

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As we enter 2014, history has come full circle. The election of Viktor Yanukovich four years ago should be remembered in the same manner as the coming to power of Volodymyr Shcherbytsky in 1972 and remaining in office for the next eighteen years.

It is now the task of contemporary democrats to ensure Yanukovich and ‘The Family’ does not stay in power as long as did his nemesis Shcherbytsky. The task of all revolutionaries is to use every means short of violence to ensure the regime falls by the end of this year.

Yanukovich, in a manner similar to Shcherbytsky, has stolen the three advances that Ukrainians received when their country became an independent state – an imperfect democracy, an ethnic Ukrainian (as opposed to Sovietophile and Russophile) national identity and a foreign policy which even under President Leonid Kuchma was described as ‘integration with Europe, cooperation with the CIS.’

Yanukovich, a twice convicted felon who presided over and financially gained from prykhvatizatsiya, mass criminality and rise of a class of rapacious oligarchs, is no stranger to theft and his presidency has the hallmarks of a medieval foreign occupation army pillaging and asset stripping the country with total neglect for the population. Yaroslav Hrytsak described it as the equivalent of a terrorist group that had taken over an airplane.

Not only is his background a guide to Yanukovich’s past and future actions, such as in the massive use of violence and drawing on vigilante sportsmen-skinheads, but also the manner in which post-Soviet Ukraine’s elites emerged. While Yanukovich is ideologically akin to Shcherbytsky, at the same time he is quite different as the Communist Party leader did not wear \$750,000 watches (as does Rinat Akhmetov), was not allied to corrupt ruling elites, and did not have billions stashed away in offshore zones.

Ukraine’s post-Soviet elites have emerged from two different sources.

The first, very prominent in the 1990s, emerged from the democratic platform of the Communist Party and Komsomol, which created liberal centrist political parties, senior Soviet nomenklatura (such as Leonid Kravchuk and Kuchma), and national democrats who grew out of Soviet era dissident groups. These three groups were patriotic, cooperated with one another, and were hostile to the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) and Crimean Russian nationalists.

The second group emerged in regions such as the Crimea, Donetsk and Odesa, where violence was most rampant in the 1990s and where a nexus of criminal groups, ex-Soviet red directors, new businessmen, and corrupt security force officers forged alliances. Their regional base in the

culturally most Soviet regions of Ukraine permitted them to integrate pan-Slavists into the Party of Regions and also cooperate with the KPU and Crimean Russian nationalists.

The Party of Regions was launched in 2000-01 after a three year 'stabilization' under Donetsk governor Yanukovych who was lobbied by Akhmetov. Donetsk agreed to not challenge Kyiv with separatism (as it had in 1993-1994) and to not challenge Kuchma politically (which Yevhen Shcherban had planned to do through Volodymyr Shcherban and Yevhen Marchuk) in return for Kyiv granting Donetsk de facto autonomy.

During the stabilization, over thirty members of the Kushnir organized crime gang, blamed for being behind the murder of crime boss Akhat Bragin in 1995, were murdered or imprisoned, according to former Police Chief Yuriy Lutsenko, by crime boss Givi Nemsadze acting on the orders of local leaders. Outstanding criminal charges against Nemsadze, who Lutsenko implicated in nearly sixty murders, were dropped by First Deputy Prosecutor Renat Kuzmin in 2010 when Yanukovych came to power.

The neo-Soviet, pro-Russian and thuggish policies of President Yanukovych are therefore natural components of the regime.

The response of Ukrainian patriots should be one of declaring "we are all now revolutionaries" in six areas in opposition to a regime that has stolen everything gained since 1991 and which continues to treat Ukraine and its people with total disrespect and contempt.

First, it is wrong to assume there are good and bad oligarchs until they begin to distance themselves from the regime which thus far they have not. It is naïve to believe that Akhmetov will break with Yanukovych as not only has he (together with Dmytro Firtash and 'The Family') gained the most since 2010 but more importantly Yanukovych and Akhmetov have been close allies since the mid-1990s. The Maydan and opposition should reach out to oligarchs with a warning that this time (unlike after the Orange Revolution) "bandits" will go to jail.

Second, opposition leaders should begin to listen to Ukrainian citizens and in doing so earn their respect. The Euro-Maydan was created by citizens who, because of the failed Viktor Yushchenko presidency, do not trust Ukrainian politicians to fulfil their promises.

Third, the Euro-Maydan needs to not only call for a united presidential candidate, it also needs to draw up a single program of action divided into what should be undertaken in 2014 and what should be implemented after the opposition comes to power. Ukrainian and foreign intellectuals should work towards drawing up such a program and policies such as those proposed by this author (<http://blogs.korrespondent.net/celebrities/blog/taraskuzo/a63460>). A Council of Foreign Advisers based upon a George Washington University working group of Western experts on Ukraine has offered to assist in this process.

Fourth, in the light of the regime not respecting democratic rights and not holding free elections opposition deputies should resign from parliament and force new elections.

Fifth, the Maydan and opposition should demand that the EU no longer support corruption and abuse of office in Ukraine by accepting billions of capital exported to their members and offshore zones each year. It is intolerable that Ukrainian elites deny European integration to their own citizens while enjoying Europe themselves.

Sixth, the Maydan and opposition need to reach out to officers in the security forces and military as in 2004 when some police, military and SBU officers cooperated with the opposition or remained neutral. This is imperative in the light of the greater threat of violence (and with this a break up of Ukraine) associated with the determination of Yanukovych and 'The Family' to take every step to stay in power after the 2015 elections.

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