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NEW DATA CREATES DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ORANGE REVOLUTIONARIES, VOTERS

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Democratic Initiatives, a well-established, Kyiv-based sociological think tank, has just published a new study, Politychnyi portret (no. 32, 2005). Democratic Initiatives was one of four Ukrainian sociological organizations involved in organizing exit polls during the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election.

Politychnyi portret reveals that 18.4% of Ukraine's population (about 5.5 million people) participated in the Orange Revolution. Of winner Viktor Yushchenko's voters, 34% participated, while only 9% of Viktor Yanukovych voters took part in protest rallies. Yanukovych, even though he had the backing of the more populous eastern Ukraine, failed to organize a counter-Orange Revolution. As Politychnyi portret (p. 59) concluded, Yushchenko voters were far "more energized."

During the 2004 election, polls revealed that 33% of Yushchenko voters and only 13% of Yanukovych voters were ready to participate in sanctioned rallies. This Yushchenko edge was also evident in voter participation in boycotts, strikes, and hunger strikes. Only 17% of Yushchenko voters refused to participate in protests, but the equivalent for Yanukovych voters was 41%.

Most Orange Revolutionaries traveled to Kyiv voluntarily, although a small number of hard-core activists were paid travel expenses. This was not the case for Yanukovych voters, who were dispatched to Kyiv in an organized operation. One indicator of the manufactured Yanukovych faction was the dried military meals that the Ministry of Defense illegally "sold" at a cost of 300,000 hryvni (\$61,000) to the Yanukovych voters who journeyed to Kyiv (Ukrayinska pravda, May 13). "While 'orange' supporters came on their own, the 'blue-

whites' are brought in," one commentator pointed out (Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia, November 27, 2004).

Two factors explain this difference between Orange Yushchenko and Blue-White Yanukovich voters.

First, civil society is far weaker and far more "managed" in eastern Ukraine, which voted largely for Yanukovich, than in western and central Ukraine, which voted for Yushchenko. Only 10% of Yanukovich voters, compared to 30% of Yushchenko voters, believe citizens should take action to protect their rights (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, April 2005).

Based on their own views of how civil society is "managed" in their hometowns, Donetsk residents and eastern Ukrainians refused to believe that the Orange Revolution protestors were in Kyiv voluntarily. They cynically believed that if Donetsk residents were paid to attend "popular" rallies, why should Yushchenko rallies be organized any differently?

Following this logic, if the protestors were not paid, then the Orange Revolution must be a U.S.-backed conspiracy (Zerkalo Nedeli/Tyzhnia, December 4-10, 2004).

When asked why the Orange Revolution took place, Yushchenko voters pointed to election fraud (59%), the need to uphold democratic values (36%), opposition to the authorities (30%), and the need to support Yushchenko's candidacy (30%). Yanukovich voters had very different views. A striking 45% believed the crowds attended rallies because they were paid, only 25% thought people actually turned out to support Yushchenko's candidacy (Politychnyi portret, p. 62).

The picture was very different among Yanukovich voters. Of those who took part in rallies, 38% believed that being paid was the reason. Of Yanukovich voters who did not take part in rallies, nearly half (48%) were convinced that participants were being paid to participate (Politychnyi portret, p. 63).

Second, fewer Yanukovych voters traveled to Kyiv than did Yushchenko voters because of demographic differences. Yushchenko voters tend to be younger and better educated, precisely the groups who are more mobile and active in civil society. Younger people would also be more able to withstand the winter cold in Kyiv. Yanukovych voters in contrast, tend to be between 50-70 old and with lower levels of education, thus representing two less-mobile social groups.

The 2004 election also revealed the fallacy of two very common Western beliefs about Ukraine.

First is the view that most documented violence was committed by Yanukovych voters against Yushchenko supporters. But when thousands of Yanukovych voters were paid to travel to Kyiv, there was not a single recorded incidence of violence. Instead, backers of both candidates freely mingled and discussed the election results.

Back in Donetsk, anybody wearing Orange symbols was beaten and had their symbols ripped off. Violence against Yushchenko supporters was organized, systematic, and brutal, while the victims refrained from responding in kind, upholding principles of non-violent action (razom.org.ua and yuschenko.com.ua, December 12, 2004; UNIAN, December 15, 2004).

Second is the view that western Ukrainians are aggressively nationalistic. After decades of Soviet propaganda and the anti-Yushchenko campaign of 2004, eastern Ukrainians remain convinced that any violence in the election must have been organized by Yushchenko "nationalists." They refused to believe that in reality, Yanukovych voters were behind all of the violence.

The Orange Revolution succeeded because western Ukraine provided participants while eastern Ukrainians remained passive. Some 45% of the Orange Revolution protestors were from western Ukraine, especially from the three Galician oblasts: Ivano-Frankivsk (69%), Lviv (46%), and Ternopil oblast (35%).

A striking 35% of western Ukrainians took part in the Orange Revolution, and 23% of west-central Ukrainians. Besides western Ukrainians, more than one-third of the residents of Kyiv participated, a figure close to that of Galicia. These figures were far lower in eastern (15%), east-central (9%), and southern Ukraine (8 %) r e s p e c t i v e l y .

These studies by Democratic Initiatives and IFES point to a close interconnection between national identity and civil society in Ukraine, with eastern Ukraine dominated by passivity and a "managed" civil society. The 2004 election also showed that violence came from eastern, not western, Ukrainians.