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Ukraine's revolution of dignity: The dynamics of Euromaidan

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the civil revolution in Ukraine, which is also known as the Euromaidan Revolution. It is regarded as the Revolution of Dignity by Ukrainian citizens. In this respect, this paper focuses on a clarification of the dynamics of the Ukrainian civil revolution. The authors will try to trace the essential causes, processes, and historical implications of the Euromaidan Revolution. In addition, we plan to assess the nature of civil revolution. This study not only was based on the primary sources in Ukrainian language but also was described from the perspective of the participants of the revolution.

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1. Introduction: the reasons for the revolutionary movement in Ukraine

Euromaidan, the protest movement, occurred in Ukraine on November 21, 2013, transpired when President Yanukovich unilaterally delayed the signing of the European Union Association Agreement. Thus, it was the abrupt policy shift from Pro-European to Pro-Russian by the second Azarov government that propelled the thousands of demonstrators (predominantly young students) to go out onto the streets. After Berkut, the Ukraine Special Force, had brutally beaten the peaceful protesters on Maidan Nezalezhnosti (translated as "Independence Square"), the student protest quickly evolved into a mass action of a national scope against the existing power.

The rapid and dramatic expansion of the civil resistance was due to the extremely critical attitude of the people about the policies that were being implemented by those in power, as well as the authoritarian use of power.

Ukraine ranked last among European countries, according to the index of confidence concerning governments, as evaluated by the people in their respective countries. The confidence in the Parliament was 1.99 on a 10-point scale (last place), the level of dissatisfaction with the government was 2.25, the confidence in the judicial system was 2.26 (last place), and the confidence in the police was 2.50 (the last place). Moreover, according to the results of the research, the confidence in Yanukovich regime was at all-time low since the establishment of independent Ukraine.¹ These polling results tell us that, in fact, the current Ukrainian powers that he had lost its legitimacy.

All those factors were reasons that caused the Ukrainian people to resist against the then current power elites and institutions. However, a deterioration of the social and economic situation and crippling of civil rights and liberties are not sufficient reasons for social revolution. There are countries that are evaluated to have worse indicators but without any sign of revolution. Social revolutions start when people

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¹ Україна пасе задніх за рівнем довіри до органів влади // Українська правда.-2 листопада 2013.// <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2013/02/11/6983262>.

are utterly disappointed by the ability of the government to improve their life (the so-called second famine effect).

The estimation of “the governmental efficiency” by international experts has rated Ukraine on par with Ghana, the Philippines, and Peru, and inferior to countries such as Mali, Namibia, Lesotho, Papua New Guinea, and Mongolia. According to the same experts the Ukrainian government was more efficient than the governments of countries such as Honduras, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Zambia, and Malawi.²

An important factor for the spreading of a revolutionary mood is discrimination among the population, albeit not formally acknowledged. Nationalistic or religious leaders with anti-government sentiment often advocate the necessity of revolutionary actions. In their eyes, the government does not possess full legitimacy. Indicative in this respect is the fact that the bulk of the protesters are mainly the Ukrainian speakers from Western Ukraine and Greek Roman Catholics of that religious affiliation. Solidarity with the protesters was expressed by the Crimean Tatar population of Crimea and almost all other major religious denominations, except for the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC).

The protests by many entrepreneurs against the current tax policy (the so-called Tax Maidan), by students against the policy in education, and the demonstrations against the arbitrary police actions in Vradiyivka (e.g., arrests and detentions), were only the forerunners of the nationwide civil resistance.

However, the most salient reason for the revolution is the failure of the new (post-Soviet) political elites in reforming Ukraine and building up a new statehood. Despite its newly earned independence, Ukraine has remained as an inefficient hybrid of the old (Soviet) and new (oligarchic) in its management and leadership. That is, the current political crisis in Ukraine is simply the external manifestation of a systemic crisis: the political elite's lack of will to reform and their inefficiency in policymaking since the 1990s.

In addition, rampant corruption among the elites accelerated the social and economic deterioration. The following statistics allude to this fact. First, according to the data of the International Transparency Organization, Ukraine ranked in 144th place, along with Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Iran, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic, which was three points less than the previous year (2011). Second, according to the Corruption Perception Index, which is determined by a 100 point scale, Russia ranked 127th place with 28 points, Kazakhstan ranked 140th with 26 points, whereas Ukraine ranked 144th with 25 points. The former Soviet Union countries, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, were ranked in 168th place with 17 points. By the standard of International Transparency Organization, scoring less than 30 points is a “disgrace to the nation.”³

The process of European integration for many Ukrainians outlined not only the geo-strategic vector of its development but also the hope for a change in the “rules

of game,” which would bring about the modernization of economic and political life.⁴ The retreat from the European integration process meant the collapse of that hope, which served as the spark that ignited the flame of Ukrainian revolution.

2. Impetus for the revolution

The material that fueled the Revolution of Dignity was the youth, more specifically, the students. These are the participants who were ready to take part in the revolutionary activities despite its apparent risks. The chaos in the transition of economic system caused a number of social problems. One of which was the devaluation of education because of the severe job market. This inevitably led the disgruntled students to the streets.

In Ukraine, according to official reports, on September 1, 2013, the number of registered unemployed was 435.4 thousand people, of which young people (from the ages of 14–35 years) were 183.3 thousand persons or 42.1%. In 2012, those registered at the State Employment Service were 887.9 thousand unemployed people under the age 35, or 48.6% of the total number of persons who were registered; 52.9 thousand of them were college graduates, 33.5 thousand completed vocational schools, and 6.3 thousand secondary school graduates. Among young people in the age group of 24–29 years, the unemployment rate increased, as compared with the year 2011, to 9.5% from 9.2%. Almost one-third of the total number of unemployed young Ukrainians were in labor exchange for more than a year since their release.⁵

This new generation, who has not smelled the gunpowder and has not participated in the previous revolutionary events, was the most active protesters this time around. The Ukrainian youth, de facto, declared a “new policy” qualitatively different from the previous one, not only by its name, but also in its form and content. This attempt is in the same vein with the revolutionary sentiment of 1968 in Western Europe, which was also against conservative society and its legacy of political and unethical values. It was a struggle of generations, parents, and children. In this context, the ideal of the Ukrainian youth and the impetus for the revolution lie in the hope of changing Ukrainian society and pursuing salutary European values.

3. Euromaidan as a socio-political phenomenon

Euromaidan as a dynamic process and socio-political phenomenon can be dissected into the following three stages.

- Stage 1. Student's Euromaidan
- Stage 2. Maidan-Camp
- Stage 3. Maidan-Sich (Struggle)

² Україна втрачає позиції у рейтингу демократії // Українська правда.- 19 березня 2013.// <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2013/03/19/6985839/>.

³ Україна через системну бездіяльність влади остаточно отаборилася в клубі найкорумпованіших держав світу: Прес реліз Transparency International в Україні від 05 грудня 2012.// <http://ti-ukraine.org/cpi>.

⁴ Yuriy Shveda, “The Revolution of Dignity in the Context of Social Theory of Revolutions,” *RSEW* 5–6/2014, vol. 42, p. 21.

⁵ Гетьман Є. Молодіжне безробіття: втрачене покоління? // Українська правда. Економічна правда.- 2 жовтня 2013.// <http://www.epravda.com.ua/publications/2013/10/2/397038/>.

The complexity of periodization is because of the difficulty in defining the precise definition of the chronological boundaries of individual events, as the scope of each intersects and overlaps, without there being an accurate picture of its transformation from one phase to another. Nevertheless, the qualitative characteristics of each of the selected phases are quite distinct.

3.1. Student's Euromaidan

In November 2013, Ukrainian government, led by President Viktor Yanukovich and Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, was preparing for the Vilnius Summit (November 25–27), where the Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) were to be signed by Ukraine and the EU.

However, on November 21, at 4 P.M., the Cabinet of Ukraine issued an order "... to suspend the process of preparation of the Association Agreement with the EU."⁶

The public did not take long to react. By 10 P.M. of the same day, at Independence Square (the main metropolitan area), hundreds of activists gathered, as the word "Euromaidan" circulated on the social networks. During the night, the size of the protest steadily increased as the community leaders, opposing party members, and Ukrainian nationalistic groups joined in.

"...people did not come to the politicians today, but the politicians came to the people" – a famous Ukrainian oppositionist, Yuriy Lutsenko, recalls.⁷

Indeed, there was not a single party banner on the Maidan entirely throughout its initial phase.

However, with the increasing number of participants, the Ukrainian Court prohibited any types of gatherings on Independence Square, St. Sophia, and European squares, and on Khreschatyk, but that did not stop the protesters: they decided to stay for the night. On the same night, dozens of people came to the squares of their cities in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kharkiv and other places in Ukraine.

On the morning of November 22, local authorities under the guise of preparing for a Christmas Fair tried to drive out the protesters and demolished their tents at the center of Kyiv.

At the same time, students in Lviv proclaimed to strike. The march of the students grew like an avalanche and their number was more than ten thousand.

Students were the driving force of the protest movement, which was not only afraid of changes, but also required them. They formed the basis of the protest movement during the first stage of Euromaidan, which started as peaceful protests with political demands for changing (or rather, returning) to European integration as the nation's foreign policy. The distinctive feature of this stage was the decisive role of students in the spreading of the protest movement, rather than the political parties.

During the night of November 23 and 24, groups of citizens began to arrive in Kyiv, especially students from different cities in Ukraine, because on November 24 a pro-European march for Ukraine has been planned. It brought together more than hundred thousand people, which shocked not only the elite powers but also the opposition. During this process, the character of Euromaidan began to be transformed.

There were two "Maidans" already existing in Kiev at the time. The first one, at Independence Square, was a "public" one, and the second one, at the European Square, was the "political" one where, of course, party symbols and leaders started appearing. On November 26, the leaders of both Euromaidans decided to join forces on the condition that politicians would not exploit the situation for their political purposes.

During the meeting, several demands were made to the President. In particular, the resignation of Azarov's cabinet, adoption of laws necessary for European integration, and signing the Association Agreement, etc. As the authorities ignored these demands, leaders of Euromaidan had to either abandon or continue protesting on the Maidan. Many activists, by the way, chose the first option and left the capital.

3.2. Maidan-camp

On the night of November 31, as the Maidan dwindled to less than half a thousand activists (most of them were students), authorities sent two thousand security forces, who dispersed the youth in a cruel and ruthless manner.

The brutality against students served as the catalyst for the second phase of Euromaidan. The abuses of the police forces and violent suppression against student protesters provoked the transformation of the student movement into the nationwide movement against the regime, as if a spark ignited a barrel of gunpowder, which caused a social explosion.

The next morning, a video footage of students being beaten by the police was released not only in Ukraine but also to the world; a barrage of criticism poured in against the authorities, such as from the European Union, NATO, the UN, the clergy, and international NGOs. Ukrainian citizens rose against the oppressive government.

On December 1, as a result, protesters came back to Kyiv, but this time with more radical sentiments and slogans.

Gathered at St. Michael's Square, the activists started the move that brought together half a million citizens, returning them to the Independence Square. On the same day, a group of activists occupied the Kyiv City State Administration Office and clashes took place on Bankova Street.

The second stage changed not only the character of Euromaidan itself but also its requirements. If the main slogans of the first phase were focused on signing of the Association Agreement with the EU and returning to the European integration course; on the other hand, the second stage, was about the resignation of Yanukovich and his cabinet.

The slogans became more and more radical after the beating of students, as compared with those heard before the incident.

⁶ Government adopted a decree on suspension of the process of preparation for the Association Agreement with the EU, // http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=246868715&cat_id=244274160-16.

⁷ Білозерська INFO. Євромайдан.- 21 листопада 2013.// <http://www.bilozerska.info/?p=17429>.

Euromaidan itself changed. The protesters set up barricades after the police assault on December 11 and then the Square resembled a fortified military camp, soon to be more disciplined and organized, thereby reflecting their anti-government sentiment.

3.3. Maidan-sich (struggle)

On January 16, 2014, which marks the beginning of the third stage, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the so-called dictatorial law.⁸ It contained legislature such as prohibiting outdoor assembly and demonstrations. That action by the government can be viewed as turning democracy into something similar to authoritarian Belarus and also a desperate attempt to retain power. However, the protest only grew in intensity. Eventually, bloody clashes occurred on January 22 at Hrushevskogo Street (near the Presidential Administration Building) and several Euromaidan participants were killed on the “Bloody Reunion Day.” The authorities’ goal to intimidate protesters did not succeed.

The adoption of these laws influenced not only the capital but also other regions. In some parts of Ukraine, there were attempts to seize local executive offices, some of which were successful. This phenomenon happened in all of the western regions (except the Transcarpathian region), as well as in some central parts of Ukraine. As the result, several meetings between the representatives of the opposition and Yanukovich were held during January and February to settle that matter peacefully. The meetings were held with the intervention of European politicians, including Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Poland, France, Germany, and the Presidential Envoy of the Russian Federation. However, the talks did not produce the desired results, especially because of the condition that reelection of the President was to be held in December 2014 (proposed on February 21), which was rejected by the Maidan since no one wanted to endure Yanukovich for another year.

From February 18 to 21, 2014, the bloodiest events of Euromaidan had taken place; the government used weapons against the peaceful protesters, during which 88 Euromaidan participants were killed. Counting subsequent deaths, including those who died from injuries sustained during the protests, resulted in a total of over 113 deaths, who are referred to as the “Heaven hundred.” They were the heroes of the “Revolution of Dignity.” The demography of the victims proves that Euromaidan covered the whole Ukraine: from the West, Kyiv, Crimea, Dnipropetrovsk, and other areas, even including other countries (e.g., Belarus, Georgia).

On February 21, the Euromaidan participants rejected an agreement between the opposition politicians and the President and stormed the Presidential Palace, insisting on his ouster. Yanukovich fled from Kyiv upon realizing the severity of the situation. The following day, the Parliament, reflecting the request of the citizens, removed Yanukovich from the position of President of Ukraine. This date can be

considered as the end of the third stage of Euromaidan’s transformation, the logical end of the Revolution of Dignity.

4. The waves of revolution and democratization

All the current problems facing Ukraine happened not in isolation but in the context of the global political processes, which undoubtedly affected Ukrainian political events. That is, the past waves of revolutions influenced the course of the Ukrainian civil revolution. Most modern social revolutions (except the 1917 Revolution in Russia) were attempts to modernize society through westernization. In this regard, one cannot ignore the continuity of revolutionary movements in Ukraine with the so-called Velvet Revolutions, which happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe.

Observed from a historical viewpoint, revolutionary activities tend to repeat at regular intervals, which is the concept of revolutionary waves. They affect the country with close cultural proximity and historical ties, which can be analyzed as being in two stages. The first stage is the prevalence of nationalistic sentiment. The second stage is the prevalence of social and economical issues.

Notably, there were the following waves of revolutionary movement in the late modern era.

1968: The waves of protest movements in Western Europe.
1989: Velvet revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe.
2004: The Orange Revolution in Ukraine.

In addition to the somewhat distant historical events, more contemporary events, such as Arab Spring, are also likely to have had influenced the course of political events in Ukraine by invoking the yearning for democracy among the citizens. Hence, the collapse of the so-called imitative democracies has been the inevitable outcome of historical “progress,” of which Ukraine was an integral part. There has been a surge of global democratic activities. Ironically, revolutions have been the point of rapprochement for various conditions and circumstances of different countries as the agent of diffusing democratic ideas and slogans against quasi-democratic governments.

5. The revolution of dignity and Ukrainian nationalist movements

The process of the Ukrainian state formation had lasted for centuries, which was deemed completed only around 1954, in which Crimea was transferred to the Ukrainian SSR. Aside from the Crimean problem, the Eastern and Western parts of Ukraine have been ruled by different states for centuries: only for the last seven decades have they been under the USSR rule. Hence, the regional differences in Ukraine have been very significant. Central and Western Ukraine were influenced by Europe, whereas Southern and Eastern Ukraine by Russia.

Even after its independence, the regionalism of Ukraine lingered on as the critical agenda, which could possibly splinter the unity of the nation. The phenomenon of this regionalism has manifested itself in political process and the Orange Revolution. The stark linguistic and cultural

⁸ Рада ухвалила закони, що відкривають шлях до масових репресій – фонд “Відродження”.// <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/01/16/7009773/>.

differences between the two regions and external pressures from Russia certainly instigated separatist intentions among the Russian-speaking populace in Ukraine, but it remained dormant without materializing into action because the pro-European identity prevailed in the early stage of its independence; although the Eastern and Southern parts of Ukraine were not necessarily pro-European, among the most popular national identity was the “One Ukraine.” However, the concept gradually lost its popularity from West to East and from North to South, but in the East, it still remained the strongest in its “national weight class.”⁹

The Ukrainian-speaking populace, clearly not the majority, was the largest and the most united among the minorities in Ukraine, who were eager for political and economic reforms as compared with others.¹⁰ This created a paradoxical situation in the early years of independent Ukraine: during the presidential campaign the winning candidate was decided by voters from the Eastern and Southern regions, but once elected the President had to rely on the Central and Western regions. This may seem strange but is, in fact, logical. The legitimacy of a government depends on its people as the only source of power in a democracy. Some parts of the population (in this case, South and East Ukraine) deemed themselves the citizens of a non-existent state (USSR) and thus did not support reform. Hence, the government appealed to patriotic groups, which were the largest and most influential of all existing social groups – albeit not the absolute majority of the country.¹¹

Since the beginning of the independent Ukraine, the authorities gave favorable treatment to the moderate nationalists, the so-called National Democrats, represented by the parties on the right side of spectrum, such as the People’s Movement of Ukraine, Ukrainian Republican Party, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, and others. The “Right,” in turn, were willing to cooperate with the post-communist government because Ukrainian nationalism, especially the post-colonial liberation political movement, was aimed at reviving the statehood of Ukraine; that is, “developing of the state” came first, thereby avoiding any sudden actions that could potentially pose a threat to its existence as an independent nation. Hence, the post-Soviet Ukrainian nationalist guidelines accommodated liberal and democratic ideas that subsequently led to their easy and organic combination of the patriotic forces’ centrist plan.

However, national radicals, the so-called “ultra-Right,” such as the Ukrainian National Assembly, Ukrainian National Self-Defense, the Social Nationalist Party of Ukraine, and some others, insisted on carrying out drastic changes in society, e.g., a strong Ukrainization in Ukraine and decommunization. However, the Ukrainians and its leadership perceived them as a destructive element. Also, large financial-industrial corporations and regional economic

elites, who had clout over the Ukrainian political process and the major media, were reluctant to invest in the unpredictable radicals. In addition, the predominantly moderate disposition of Ukrainian voters did not provide a favorable environment for the radicals. Consequently, the radical nationalists have occupied only a marginal position in the Ukrainian political and public spheres.

Through the parliamentary elections of 1998 and 2002, the supporters of the national-democratic parties, in favor of pro-European policy and the protection of Ukrainian national culture, have more than doubled (from 10.2% to 21.5%). It is important to note that the popularity of the right-wing parties did not just increase in quantity, but, in fact, expanded geographically from Western to Central Ukraine. In 1998, the voters in only two regions of Western Ukraine (Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk) voted for the right-wing parties with more than 50% support. About a quarter of the voters in Lviv, Rivne, and Volyn supported the right-wing parties. As compared with 1998, the right-wing party candidates in 2002 received more than 50% support in the six regions of Western Ukraine (Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Volyn, and Chernivtsi) and received about 25% support in nine areas, notably eight of them from Central Ukraine. In effect, they established a political stronghold in almost all Ukrainian ethnic territories, which formerly belonged to the Prince and the Hetman of Ukraine and Poland and the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the early 20th century. Two years later, the same regions, essentially the basin for the Orange Revolution, unanimously supported presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko.

After the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010), who claimed to be a Ukrainian nationalist, ended in a fiasco, the nationalist ideology also lost its popularity. As a result, Viktor Yanukovich, who relied on the support of the population of southeastern regions of Ukraine, was elected as the President in 2010. The new government began to pursue policies aimed at radicalization of deliberate confrontation in a society of culture, language, and identity. Many Ukrainians deemed those policies of the ruling party as anti-national. As part of the wave of protests against Yanukovich government, the ultra right-wing party, “Svoboda,” won the parliamentary elections in 2012 with 10.5% support. This is tantamount to a “landslide” result, considering the results of the parliamentary elections in 2006 and 2007, of which they won a modest 0.36% and 0.76% of the votes, respectively.

As stated above, “Svoboda” became the first radical nationalist party to enter the Ukrainian Parliament. However, the success of Svoboda does not signify popular support for the radical Ukrainian nationalist ideology. The support for Svoboda was because of tactical reasons rather than ideological. First, as a protest against the anti-Ukrainian policy of Yanukovich, the voters had chosen the most defiant nationalist party in Ukraine. Second, in essence, Svoboda supporters ensured the fiercest opposition against the government. This was necessary as the national-democratic forces had discredited themselves – many of the deputies after the victory of Yanukovich in the 2010 presidential election turned traitor and joined the government coalition. Given the situation, Svoboda, with a clear position and rigid discipline, would keep its deputies in the opposition

⁹ Грицак Я. Про сенсовність і безсенсовність націоналізму в Україні // Грицак Я. Страсі за націоналізмом. – Київ. – 2004. – С. 192–193.

¹⁰ Психологія масової політичної свідомості та поведінки / Відп. редактор В. О. Васютинський. – Київ. – 1997. – 163 с.; Васютинський В. Масова політична свідомість і влада: рух по колу чи рух уперед? // Українські варіанти. – 1999. – № 3–4. – С. 77–82.

¹¹ Танчин И. Постматеріальна революція // Апологія (Москва). – 2005. – № 6 (Август). – С. 84–85.

coalition, thereby firmly and vigorously opposing the government.

The Revolution of Dignity was not a direct reaction against the Yanukovich regime's rejection of Ukrainian national values – albeit that issue mattered. The more fundamental causes were: (1) indignation of citizens toward the unprecedented rise in corruption, (2) failure to sign the Association Agreement with the EU for the prospects of rapprochement with Russia, and (3) the brutal violence that the police used on those who dared to express dissatisfaction with Yanukovich's policies. This general, rather than narrow, national perspective in the ranks of protesters united millions of people across the country, including the Southern and Eastern regions. However, as the "Ukrainian Heartland" was the mainstay of the protesters, whereas the Yanukovich regime positioned itself as Russian-oriented, the protest movement could not have chosen another symbolic language other than that of nationalist. In this context, it is interesting to remember the traditional Ukrainian nationalist slogan, "Glory to Ukraine! Glory to Heroes!" which has lost its original radical nationalistic connotations, for it manifested itself as new symbolic meanings. Previously, it was the slogan of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army who fought against the German and Soviet occupation from 1942 to 1952 predominantly in Western Ukraine. Now the slogan shifted to: "Glory to the fallen heroes of Maidan."

Separatist protests occurred against Euromaidan in the Eastern and the Southern regions of Ukraine and were instigated by the local regional elites closely associated with Yanukovich. However, this movement would have been impossible without the active participation of Russian propaganda and its agents. During civil wars, as a rule, society becomes radical; however, the civil war between a revolutionary regime and separatists led to an unexpected outcome in Ukraine: the radical nationalists lost its support but the National Democrats gained popularity.

6. On success and completeness of revolutions

A revolution is deemed successful when it subverts the established government. A revolution is deemed completed when a new government is established according to the slogans and demands of the revolutionary masses – at least partially.

The Orange Revolution in 2004 was successful but incomplete as the new political elites were not able to carry out the promulgated revolutionary tasks. The Revolution of Dignity – in fact, a continuation of the Orange Revolution – was another attempt of Ukrainian society at not only changing the ruling elite but also making it carry out a revolutionary program.

In general, a fall of imitative democracy does not automatically mean the emergence of real democracy, which requires tremendous efforts and time for the maturity of a society. At times, a rapid transformation of society calls for a social revolution, as it is a shift from a traditional to a rational type of legitimacy. The complete reloading of society as if on a "blank slate" (that is, *tabula rasa*) is littered with problems and issues. And this process requires both a well worked out program and moral and professional implementers.

In Ukraine, following the Euromaidan, a political force emerged with new agenda. They are working toward establishing a new Ukrainian statehood, both in the legislature and executive branches of the revolutionary government. At this juncture, it can be evaluated that the Revolution of Dignity is not only successful but also will be heading toward completion.

7. Conclusion: the unfinished revolution!

The massive protests in Ukraine led to the fall of Yanukovich's kleptocratic regime. However, this does not signify the end of the Revolution of Dignity, but rather its beginning, as Ukraine requires a complete overhaul in its political system, and not just a simple change of regime. The Revolution of Dignity prevented the country from "slipping" into open state authoritarianism. However, its main task was to lay the foundation for a liberal and stable democracy.

The first step toward this direction was the advent of revolutionary government, which could reflect the voices of Euromaidan. On February 22, 2014, Victor Yanukovich escaped from the country. The Parliament deemed his act unconstitutional for abandoning his duties as the President. As a result of it, an election for a new president was scheduled on May 25, 2014.¹² The presidential election took place while Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine and pro-Russian terrorists in Donetsk and Luhansk regions were trying to ban the election altogether. Hence, the Presidential elections did not take place in 25 (out of 225) districts of Lugansk and Donetsk regions.¹³ However, despite this tense situation, 60.3% of the Ukrainians voted.¹⁴

Other than some issues in the procedural aspects of the election, the majority of international observers (252 representatives from foreign countries and 2502 from international organizations) have recognized the election as a fair reflection of the will of people. Many observed that the involvement of administrative resources (the use of power on the side of a particular candidate) was reduced to a minimum, as distinguished from the past elections in which such resources were frequently exploited.

Twenty-one candidates, representing virtually all areas of the Ukrainian political spectrum, ran for the election. But there were two main contenders, Yulia Tymoshenko (the leader of the party, *Bat'kiwshchyna*) and Petro Poroshenko, who was supported by the *Udar* and *Solidarnist* parties.

Petro Poroshenko declared a slogan for his electoral campaign, "To live in a new way!" and won the election. A majority (54.7%) of the Ukrainians voted for him, whereas 12.81% of the Ukrainians voted for Tymoshenko.

It is interesting to know that only 2.7% of the voters supported M. Dobkin, who was the official candidate of the Party of Regions and only 1.2% of the voters supported the leader of the Ukrainian Communists, P. Symonenko. Oleg Lyashko,

¹² Рада скинула Януковича // Українська правда.- 22 лютого 2014.// <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/02/22/7015777/>.

¹³ ЦВК: 25 округів на Сході України у неділю не голосують // Українська правда. 25 травня 2014.// <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/05/25/7026406/>.

¹⁴ Офіційний сайт ЦВК.// http://www.cvk.gov.ua/vp2014/wp063pt00_t001f01=702pt001f01=702.html.

leader of the Radical Party, received 8.8% of the vote and finished in third place, whereas the leaders of the Ukrainian radical nationalists, Oleg Tyagnybok (Svoboda) and Dmytro Yarosh (The Right Sector political party), received only 1.3% and 1.1%, respectively.¹⁵

After taking the oath of the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko promised to hold an early parliamentary election, which to his mind would be a serious step toward the process of lustrating the government, its “reloading.”

On October 26, 2014, the Ukrainian parliamentary election was held. It was based on a special procedure: a mixed proportional-majoritarian electoral system with a 5 percent electoral threshold for political parties. The election was not conducted in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (12 districts), in 6 districts of Lugansk region, and 9 districts of Donetsk region. Twenty-nine political parties participated in the national election. The voter turnout was at 52.42%.

The voting proceeded rather peacefully without any major violations or incidents. There were some violations that were identified by observers on the day of the election; however, they were neither systematic nor manipulative, and did not significantly affect the result.¹⁶

Six political parties met the 5 percent electoral threshold: the right liberal party of the former Prime Minister of Ukraine, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, the Narodnyi Front (22.14%); the Petro Poroshenko Block (21.82%); the Liberal Party Samopomich (10.97%); the party of former governmental officials, the Oppositional Block (9.42%); the populist Radical Party (7.44%); and the center-left party, Bat’kivshchyna, of Yulia Tymoshenko (5.68%).¹⁷

It is noteworthy that for the first time in the history of Ukraine there were no Communists in the Ukrainian Parliament, as well as right-wing radicals.

On November 21, 2014 – the date of the anniversary of the Revolution of Dignity – the five main political parties, the Narodnyi Front, Petro Poroshenko Block, Liberal Party Samopomich, Radical Party, and Bat’kivshchyna, have signed a coalition agreement to form a parliamentary majority and lay down the principles for its future implementation. Despite their political diversity, the newly formed coalition clearly acted as pro-European forces in unity.

Were the signed coalition agreement to be executed and there is a definite favorable result – at least partially if not to a full extent – we could safely say that the Revolution of Dignity was not in vain. The revolution will be deemed completed only when the newly formed coalition successfully implements a new political system with the approval of a majority of Ukrainians. In the end, this will determine the fate of Euromaidan.

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¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Проміжні підсумки результатів спостереження громадянської мережі ОПОРА щодо перебігу дня голосування.// <http://oporaua.org/news/7249-promizhni-pidsumky-rezultativ-sposterezhenja-gromadjanskoji-merezhi-opora-shchodo-perebigu-dnja-golosuvannja>.

¹⁷ Верховна Рада України VIII скликання.// <http://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/>.