Can Ukrainian Communists and Socialists Evolve to Social Democracy?

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In the Ukrainian political lexicon, the term "Left" usually refers to parties that are to the left of both social democracy in its traditional understanding and to the left of several Ukrainian social democratic parties. In fact, one of the problems for Ukrainian politics is the absence of a real and strong social democratic party; the quite influential Social Democratic Party of Ukraine/United—SPDU(o)—represents the interests of the oligarchs and could discredit the very idea of social democracy; and the three other social democratic groups are not influential.

The main parties of the Ukrainian Left are the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), reborn in 1993 (with around 140,000 members, mostly from the older generation), and the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU), created in the autumn of 1991 (with a current membership of sixty thousand). In addition to these, both the Peasant Party of Ukraine (SelPU, 1992) and the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU, 1996) were relatively active in the second half of the 1990s (see figure 1).

Regarding its future stance, the Left in Ukraine has choices to make: between communism and social democracy, and between pro-Russian and pro-European choice. In this article, I will maintain that although the non-modernized Communists seem to have no chances of coming to power, the more moderate Socialists could come to power in coalition with other forces (mainly centrist), but that would require more flexibility from them as well as their transformation into a center-left force. In this article, I will discuss primarily the ideology of the Left, the Left's electoral successes and defeats, the lessons that the Left has learned, and its prospects for the future as they are seen on the eve of the campaign that began on 1 January 2002 for the parliamentary elections to be held on 31 March 2002.

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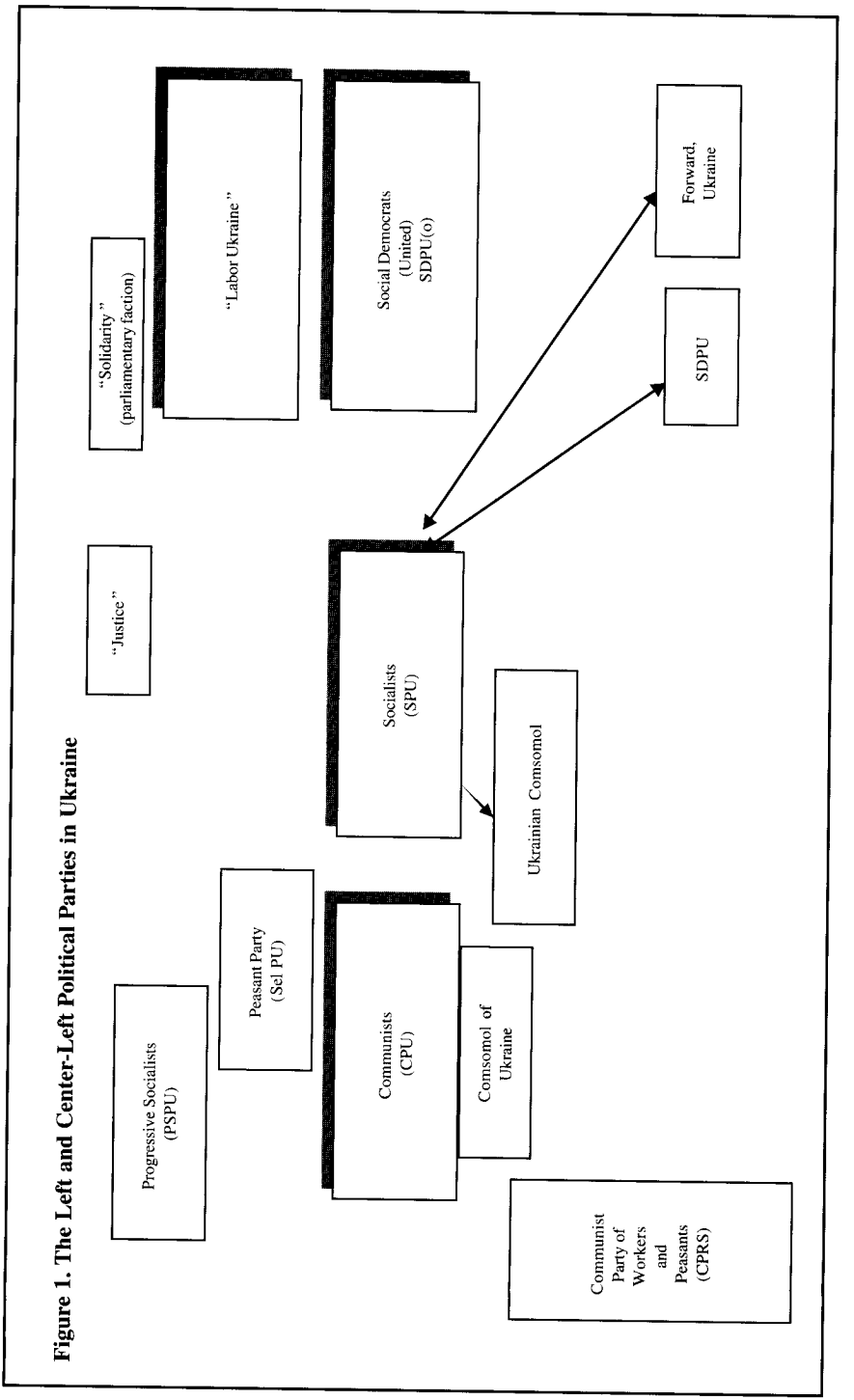

Figure 1. The Left and Center-Left Political Parties in Ukraine

Historical Background

All parties of the Left are connected historically and, to a great extent, ideologically to the CPU, which was a part of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Because the CPSU was a unitary structure, the CPU was viewed as just a regional organization of the CPSU, with no autonomy. In post-war times, the CPU was more conservative than the Communist parties in the Baltic republics or the Moscow regional organization of the CPSU. Moscow waged a cruel battle against so-called "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism"; thus the leaders of the CPU strove to be "more saintly than the Roman Pope" to survive politically (as well as physically) during Stalin's reign.

During perestroika, the "hardliners" within the CPU continued to dominate. They did not want to engage in any dialogue with the opposition (such as the Polish "round table" between the Communists and Solidarity) and opposed any modernization of the party. Those who finally did turn to dialogue with the opposition (in particular, Leonid Kravchuk, head of the Ukrainian parliament, who later became the first president of Ukraine), voted to ban the CPU after the failed August 1991 coup against Gorbachev in Moscow (the attempted coup led to the banning of the CPSU in Russia). All of this explains to a great extent the inflexibility of the CPU when it re-emerged in 1993.

Comparing the situation on the left flank in Ukraine with that in other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, analysts stress that Ukrainian Communists have a strong partner-rival in the SPU, which also emerged on the basis of the banned CPU but which is politically to the right of the CPU: "In Russia nothing came out of this idea" to create a noncommunist party, and initiators of these attempts remained "politically eccentric and marginal" (e.g., Roy Medevedev, Vasily Lipitski) or "turned into functionaries of the new regime" (e.g., Ivan Rybkin, Alexander Rutzkoi).[1]

There are no Left parties in Ukraine with historical legacies: that is, no parties that were destroyed by the Communist regime and then reemerged. Such parties resumed their activity in many Central-Eastern European countries, but became strong in only the Czech Republic and Slovenia. All four Left parties had their base within the banned Communist Party, but the term "successor party" can only partially be applied to them (contrary to most of the countries of Central-Eastern Europe, where Communist parties began to transform themselves into socialist and social-democratic parties). That can be explained by the fact that material and organizational resources of the former CPU went to that part of the nomenklatura that transformed itself into the non-institutionalized "party of the power."

It is possible to apply to the Ukrainian Left the classification that Herbert Kitschelt suggested: SelPU—clientele party; PSPU—one leader party; and CPU—combining both the ideological (party of the program) and the clientele types.[2] Such combination also characterized the SPU, although ideological elements were not clearly outlined for a long time. At the same time, the party has a charismatic leader, Oleksander Moroz, speaker of the Rada from 1994 to 1998.

Attitudes toward Marxism-Leninism

Successes in the parliamentary elections of 1994 and 1998 (the CPU faction was the largest in the Rada, although it did not have an absolute majority) contributed to the CPU's conviction of the righteousness of its cause. Engaging in polemics with the Socialists, Petro Symonenko, the CPU's leader, claimed that the CPU "was actually the only left force that openly supported the socialist perspective." It had no doubts about the validity of Marxism-Leninism.[3] The PSPU adheres to Marxism-Leninism in the same way, although ironically it uses a rose (the symbol of the Social Democrats) as its own emblem.

Essentially, the Socialists and Communists differ in how they explain socialism's defeat in the USSR. The Communists see the reasons embedded in the cold war against the USSR. On the other hand, the SPU observed in its 1992 program that Soviet society "was unable to overcome the transitional phase from capitalism to socialism."[4]

"The Communist approach to geopolitics now resembles Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilizations.'"

On certain issues, the PSPU appears even more orthodox than the CPU. Although the PSPU (as well as the CPU) does not envision a "dictatorship of the proletariat," it considers the USSR's 1936 constitution (called "Stalin's constitution") a symbol of the victory of "bourgeois parliamentarism," and it demands a return to the 1917–1924 system: the abolition of equal electoral right and the introduction of a system of Soviets based on enterprises (not territorial districts). Nataliya Vitrenko, the populist leader of the PSPU (whom opponents refer to as "Zhirinovsky in a skirt"), promised to send those responsible for the free market reforms to the mines, to close all borders, and then to take an "inventory of the national economy."[5]

The Communist Party, in spite of its own announcements supporting small and medium business, places emphasis on safeguarding the state ownership of basic branches and land and on the monopolizing of foreign trade. Only in the election campaign platform of 1999 was its odious stance on "nationalization of the banking system" removed.[6]

The ideologically amorphous SelPU, although not formally rejecting privatization, nonetheless emphasizes preserving the system of collective farms and opposes the sale of land (as does the SPU).

The SPU's position was always the most flexible. The SPU's program-minimum stipulates a "people's democratic system" based on economic pluralism. The program-maximum, in its new 2000 version, proposes a "people's economy . . . based on the liberation of labor." (According to the Socialists, neither the Social Democrats nor the Communists were able to overcome "hired labor.") This economy will be based on "people's enterprises," which will include "enterpris-

es with *different forms of ownership* if they will work on the basis of self-government, free from the exploitation of labor [my italics]."[7]

Nation and State Building

The Communist Party adheres to the traditional Leninist interpretation of the relationship between national self-determination and class struggle. Symonenko claimed that because the current political regime in Ukraine was attempting to restore capitalism with the help of the "national card," the CPU would fight against what he called "bourgeois-nationalistic government."[8]

Despite that, only a small number of extreme leftists in the CPU belonged to the group that called for the restoration of the USSR. The majority of Communists lean de facto toward the union of Eastern Slavic countries, even though they understand the present impracticality of their appeals, given that the Left is not in power in Ukraine or Russia. The 1997 plenum of the Central Committee of the CPU called for the reconstruction of the "union state," but in the course of the elections of 1999, this rhetoric softened. Symonenko promised to preserve the "non-aligned" (!) status of Ukraine. At the same time, the promise included striving toward a "union of sovereign states of brotherly nations," the first steps being the recognition of Russia and Belarus as "strategic partners" and the creation of "common economic space."[9] Nevertheless, the Ukrainian Communists would hardly want to take orders once again from Moscow. Most likely the CPU's actions will differ from its rhetoric.

Indeed, the CPU participates in the activity of the Union of Communist Parties–Communist Party of the Soviet Union (SKP-KPSS), although together with the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) it considers the SKP-KPSS merely a forum in which parties may exchange opinions. At the Fifth Congress of the CPU in 2000, Symonenko severely criticized the SKP-KPSS leaders' proposal to unite the Russian and Belarusian Communist Parties, which Communists from other countries in the CIS can also join later. Radical supporters of these views were expelled from the CPU and created the Communist Party of Workers and Peasants (CPRS).[10] When the question of a moratorium on Ukraine's membership was discussed in the Council of Europe, Communists and Symonenko himself, regardless of their condemnation of Kuchma's regime, advocated the preservation of Ukraine's membership in this organization.

Finally, there are "national Communists" in the CPU. First and foremost in this group is Borys Oliinyk, a famous Ukrainian poet who for two consecutive terms of the Rada headed the committee on foreign relations. According to some data, he believed that the CPU ought to support the Socialist Moroz, and not Symonenko, in the 1999 presidential elections. Oliinyk sharply criticized Moscow's territorial claims against Ukraine. Commenting on the 1996 project to create a union state in Russia and Belarus, he announced that "with Ukraine, the Belarusian model will not succeed." At the same time, he saw in the actions of NATO against Yugoslavia, a "crime perpetrated by spiritually lacking powers against Christianity, in particular the Slavic civilization and its moral and ethnic foundations—don't kill and don't steal."[11]

The Communist approach to geopolitics now resembles Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations." Symonenko stresses: "The Catholic threat poses a risk for the whole Orthodox geopolitical space."[12] Out of three Orthodox churches in Ukraine, however, the CPU supports only the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under Moscow's jurisdiction. Furthermore, the CPU, together with the Russian Duma and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, came out against the pope's visit to Ukraine in June 2001. This gives evidence that the CPU is counting on a clear and well-defined segment of the electorate, not the whole nation.

Vitrenko, leader of the PSPU, came out favoring more ultra-radical promises during the 1999 presidential election campaign: to refuse Ukraine's nuclear-free status and to reach the collective security arrangement among Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.[13]

Oleksandr Tkachenko, the de facto leader of SelPU and speaker of the parliament in 1998–99, supported Ukraine's membership in the union between Russia and Belarus and the creation of a common economic and legislative space. At the end of 2001 he quit the SelPU and joined the CPU, because of his desire to secure his re-election to the parliament on the CPU's party list.

As for the Socialists, their leader Oleksandr Moroz's statement on the eve of the 1994 presidential elections became well known: "Those who do not have a care as to the disintegration of the USSR do not have a heart—those who advocate its restoration do not have brains."[14] It is a fact, however, that the SPU rank-and-file members were more orthodox than its leader. That is why the SPU defended the need to strengthen the CIS.

Nevertheless, during the 1999 presidential election campaign, Moroz toned down this rhetoric and did not reminisce about strengthening the CIS or about making any concrete steps in this direction, but instead emphasized Ukraine's nonaligned status. The SPU's newly edited program reiterated this position: the party favored "brotherly relations with Russia, Belarus, and other neighbors [which could mean Poland as well] and consolidation of Slavic peoples."[15]

In general, the Ukrainian Left's position on nation- and state building (with the exception of the SPU) is clearly distinguishable from that of the Russian Communists. The CPRF defends above all the interests of the "titular ethnicity" (that is, Russian). The Ukrainian Left attracts the pro-Russian element of the electorate to an even greater extent than did the parties that in the 1998 elections stood for a "Slavic idea." These parties (Union Party, bloc "SLOn") did not overcome the 4 percent barrier. Thus, first, ethno-political slogans have an effect in Ukraine only in combination with social protection slogans. Second, according to some analysts, that provides evidence that the CPU receives support not so much from the appeal of slogans referring to "Slavic" unity, but from its emphasis on Ukrainian territorial patriotism[16] (while unfairly accusing the right-centrists of Ukrainian ethnic patriotism).

The Relativity of the Left's Electoral Successes

During the 1998 parliamentary elections, the first elections under the new mixed system (225 seats by party lists, 225 single member districts), the CPU list

received 24.7 percent, the SPU-SelPU bloc received 8.6 percent, and the PSPU received 4.05 percent (with a 4 percent barrier).

However, the Left's success was not fortified in single member districts. They received only 48 mandates out of 223 (21.5 percent). In western Ukraine the Left did not receive a single seat.

Thus, in voting for party lists, the electorate supported the Left's slogans for "social protection." In single-member districts, however, non-party candidates (mostly businessmen or state bureaucrats) had the advantage, as they possessed material resources and promised material gains for the inhabitants of the given district. They gained 101 out of 223 mandates.

"The majority of the Left's electorate spoke out for integration with Russia and the creation of supranational structures."

As a result, the additional seats that the Left gained at the expense of the parties that did not overcome the 4 percent barrier compensated for defeats in single-mandate districts. Ultimately, the percentage of seats received by the Left, Centrists, and the Right corresponded, more or less, to the results of voting by party lists. Andrew Wilson and Sarah Birch emphasize that, as a whole, the Left received approximately the same number of votes and seats as in 1994. In their opinion, "Ukraine still has no real *national* party system, only a set of local systems, but the sum total of these systems now seems to produce overall results that are fairly predictable." As a result, "instability in parliamentary politics cannot be attributed to turbulence in the electorate's voting behavior. Rather, it can be attributed to instability in the party system at the elite level."[17]

The Left considered their potential electorate to be around two-thirds of the voters (eleven million who did not regularly receive a salary, and fourteen million pensioners). Only nine million voted for the Left in the 1998 parliamentary elections, however, indicating that a considerable number of voters received income from the shadow economy. Therefore the figures of the real standard of living (and not the formal-statistical one) should have been revised. Moreover, some of those who were in difficult financial situations did not want to vote for the Left.

The local Rada elections confirmed once again, as in 1994, that preference was given to non-party candidates who could resolve city and village issues (in the first place leaders of local executive bodies and directorate. Party members accounted for only 7.6 percent in the local Radas. The Communists were best represented among the parties but received only 2.9 percent; the Socialists all of 0.25 percent; and the Peasant's Party, 0.13 percent.[18]

The weakness of the Left in single-member districts accounts for the debate on the introduction of a purely proportional electoral system in Ukraine for the

parliamentary elections in March 2002. On one hand, the introduction of this system will definitely stimulate the parliament's structuring along party lines, which will have a positive effect on Ukrainian politics (that is why center-right forces support this idea as well); on the other hand, authorities fear that Ukrainian Communists could repeat the Communist victory in the 2001 elections in Moldova, which followed the introduction of a proportional system there. Nevertheless, these fears are deliberately exaggerated by President Kuchma (who prefers to balance between different factions in the Rada rather than to rely on the defined majority) and by oligarchic factions, which have weaker chances in proportional elections than in elections in controlled single-member districts. As a result, the same mixed majoritarian-proportional system (50:50) is in effect for the 2002 parliamentarian elections.

On 13 December 2001, that is, on the eve of the 2002 parliamentary elections, Verkhovna Rada adopted new law on elections to local Radas. Radas in villages and small towns will be still elected in single-member majoritarian districts. Radas in rayons (districts) and oblasts (regions) will be elected on a mixed majoritarian-propotional system (50:50). However, it seems very likely that the president veto this law.

During the 1999 presidential campaign, Oleksander Moroz, leader of the SPU, was President Leonid Kuchma's most serious opponent. That is why the president's administration strove to break up the Left and to guarantee the participation of the less-dangerous CPU leader in the second round. As a result, the "Russian scheme" of 1996 was realized in the second round: the incumbent president against the "Communist threat."

The Left's unified position before the second round seemed favorable for them. Together they gathered 44.5 percent of the votes (see table 1). On 14 November 1999, however, Kuchma achieved a landslide victory over Symonenko in the second round. In the east, south, and center, Kuchma and Symonenko were "neck by neck," but Kuchma actually broke away in the north and defeated Symonenko in the west. Kuchma did well in large and medium size cities (often even in those located in "red" regions): He won in twenty-two out of twenty-five oblast centers.

As a whole, the regional peculiarities repeated the pattern seen in the 1994 elections. The acting president (Kravchuk in 1994, and Kuchma in 1999) collected more votes in the center and in the west of Ukraine. But in 1999, oblasts in the south and east were added—Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and even in the city of Sevastopol (in Crimea)—which provided a more even distribution of votes between regions and played an important role in Kuchma's victory. Against the background of interethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia and Russia, Kuchma's supporters actively stressed that Ukraine had succeeded in preserving interethnic peace. On the eve of the second round, they asked the voters to choose between "peace and stability" and "war."

Given that Symonenko's victory would have strengthened the CPRF's position on the eve of the December 1999 Russian parliamentary elections, the first Russian channel ORT campaigned for Kuchma, emphasizing the impracticality

TABLE 1. The 1999 Presidential Elections

Main candidates	Party affiliation	Percentage of votes won, first round	Percentage of votes won, runoff
Center and center-right			
Kuchma	Nonaffiliated	36.49	56.25
Marchuk	N/a	8.13	—
Center-left			
Moroz	Socialist Party of Ukraine	11.29	—
Left			
Symonenko	Communist Party of Ukraine	22.24	37.80
Vitrenko	Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine	10.97	—

Source: Tsentral'na vyborcha komisia. Vybory Presidenta Ukra_ny (Kyiv, 2000), 292, 354.

of the CPU's slogans regarding a union with Russia (which would undoubtedly weaken pro-Russian sentiments in eastern Ukraine).

According to data from exit polls, ethnic Russians were almost equally divided between Kuchma and Symonenko (Kuchma with 48 percent, Symonenko with 46 percent), but Kuchma led with a large advantage among Ukrainians (63 to 32) and "other nationalities" (Jews, Poles, Crimean Tatars, etc.) (62 to 35).[19]

A comparison of results from sociological polls, conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology on the eve of the 1998 and 1999 elections, showed that after the 1998 parliamentary elections, the center-left electorate became as young as the center-right. The Left electorate's ethnic structure was practically unchanged, whereas the Ukrainian group actually grew in the center-left electorate and its ethno-political characteristics were now hardly distinguishable from those of the center-right electorate (table 2).

The main base of the Communist Party was the left-bank Ukraine; for the SPU, central Ukraine. Thus, their regional bases overlap only partially. According to Andrew Wilson's theory, that could partially explain why the CPU'S modernization has been hindered: its drift to the right could only create a vacuum and strengthen ultra-radicals within and outside the party.[20]

The majority of the Left's electorate spoke out for integration with Russia and the creation of supranational structures. But supporters of this view in the center-left electorate made up only 30 percent. The percentage of voters who support friendly relations with Russia ("with open borders, and no visas or customs") but without unification with Russia was practically the same in both center-left and center-right electorates (57 and 56 percent, respectively).

Finally, supporters of a mixed economy in the center-left electorate surpassed

TABLE 2. Composition of the Main Electoral Groups in the 1999 Presidential Elections, in Percentages

	Left (Symonenko)	Center-left (Moroz and Vitrenko)[a]	Center-right (Kuchma)
Ethnic self-identification			
Ukrainians	64.3	85.0	79.1
Russians	30.8	12.1	14.5
Other groups	4.9	3.0	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Ethno-linguistic groups			
Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians	24.4	51.9	54.1
Russian-speaking Ukrainians	39.9	33.0	25.0
Russian-speaking Russians	28.5	10.8	13.3
Other groups	7.2	4.3	7.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Valery Khmelko, "Osoblyvosti elektorativ livykh," in *Ukra_ns'ki livi: mizh leninizmom i sotsial-demokratijeiu*, ed. Alexi Haran'and Alexander Maiboroda (Kyiv: KM Academia, 2000), 215.

[a]It is a paradox, but the electorate of radical-populist Vitrenko demonstrated in the polls the same center-left orientation as SPU's electorate.

by almost three times supporters of a purely state-led economy (69 and 24 percent). Those who favored the development of private enterprise in this electorate were more numerous than in the Left by four times (15 and 3.7 percent, respectively).[21]

All of that attests to the fact that in the second round, Moroz could have drawn in a wider spectrum of voters than Symonenko, the leader of the CPU. If after the first round the three Left candidates outstripped Kuchma by 2.1 million votes, the result was that Symonenko lost by a difference of 5.1 million votes, one million fewer votes than the combined Left vote in the first round. This provides evidence that for the majority of the population, and even for a part of the Left's supporters, returning the CPU to power was seen as a greater evil than economic difficulties. For the first time during the presidential elections the Left's opponents won. (In the 1991 and 1994 elections the Left ultimately supported the future president.)

It is true that during the elections numerous violations occurred that were to the acting president's advantage. Furthermore, according to analysts, these elections were less democratic than those in 1991 and 1994. Nonetheless, sociological surveys before the vote as well as results from exit polls showed that Kuchma would beat the leader of the Communists: the results of the elections confirmed these predictions.

After President Kuchma's reelection and the Left's defeat, the political process in Ukraine was marked by two contradictory trends: On one hand, an

anti-Communist majority emerged in the parliament, which approved reform-oriented Victor Yushchenko as prime minister. The anti-Communist majority changed the leadership of Rada committees headed by the Left; abolished the 7 November holiday ("Day of the October Revolution"), and in the ninth year of Ukraine's independence removed the coat of arms of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic from the parliament's building. In 2000, under the Yushchenko government, GDP stopped declining and increased for the first time since independence.

On the other hand, Kuchma's crackdown on opposition during the presidential campaign continued in 2000, especially in the April 2000 referendum on the so-called "people's initiative" on six political issues substantially expanding presidential powers. The executive launched an obvious pressure campaign. After severe criticism from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Constitutional Court deemed unconstitutional proposals of no confidence in the present parliament and the adoption of the constitution by referendum. Another four proposals were approved in the referendum on 16 April 2000: to legalize the president's right to dismiss the parliament if it fails to form a permanent majority within one month or if it fails to approve the state budget submitted by the cabinet within three months; to eliminate deputies' immunity; to reduce the number of parliamentary deputies from 450 to 300; and to form a two-chamber parliament. Because only the parliament had the authority (by a two-thirds vote) to amend the Basic Law (which was confirmed by the Constitutional Court), President Kuchma put enormous pressure on the Rada to implement those results. However, Kuchma has not succeeded, as his power was weakened in the course of the "tapegate" scandal (in fall 2000–spring 2001). The tapes, allegedly made in Kuchma's cabinet by Major Mykola Melnychenko of Kuchma's security service, reveal Kuchma's involvement in corruption, violation of human rights, and even, indirectly, in the disappearance and death of opposition journalist Heorgij Gongadze.[22]

Moreover, the Yushchenko government appeared under attack from the oligarchs—the leaders of politico-economic "holdings" whose power depends on the shadow economy and protection from the president. The oligarchs control the so-called "centrist factions" (see table 3).

In April 2001, Yushchenko's government was voted out as a result of a combined vote of the Communist and oligarchic factions (with Kuchma's "non-interference"). Characteristically, however, although the Socialists criticized Yushchenko's government, only two members of the faction voted for his removal.

The SPU's Drift toward the Center and the CPU's Stagnation

After defeat in the presidential elections, the CPU's leadership admitted serious problems connected with the party's social base: "the alienation of the working mass from the Communist Party," and the absence of the necessary support among intellectuals, the young generation, and even the "red directorate."[23] But the paradox lies in the fact that with stable support of about 20 percent of the electorate, the CPU's modernization is hindered because its leaders are convinced that they will end up in the parliament under any circumstances.

TABLE 3. Factions in the Parliament

Factions	Percentage of votes won 29 March 1998	Number of deputies as of 12 May 1998	Number of deputies as of 11 June 2001	Number of deputies as of 03 Jan 2002
Left	—	140	112	113
Communist Party of Ukraine	24.68	123	112	113
Progressive Socialist party of Ukraine	4.05	17	—	—
"Left Center" (Socialist Party of Ukraine)	8.56	35	16	18
Center		138	199	191
"Solidarity"	—	—	21	20
"Apple"	—	—	15	15
"Labor Ukraine"	3.06	—	46	38
Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine (United)	4.01	25	34	32
"Democratic Union" Party	—	—	29	15
"Unity"	—	—	—	18
Party of the Greens of Ukraine	5.44	24	17	15
"Regions of Ukraine"	—	—	20	23
People's Democratic Party (NDP)	5.01	89	17	15
Center-Right		86	78	73
"Fatherland" (based on former "Hromada")	4.68	39	25	24
Ukrainian People's Movement ("Rukh" led by Yurij Kostenko)[a]	—	—	23	22
People's Movement of Ukraine ("Rukh" led by Hennadij Udovenko)[a]	9.40	47	16	14
"Reforms-Congress"	3.13	—	14	13
Nonaligned	—	49	43	50
Total		448	448	445

[a]In spring 1999, the main national-democratic force, Rukh, split in two.

Nevertheless, after defeat in the 1999 elections, signs of hesitation appeared in the CPU itself. Six deputies left the CPU, including Oleksandr Starynetz, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Leninist Communist Union of Youth of Ukraine (LKSMU). In March 2000 the Congress of the alternative Ukrainian Communist Union of Youth (UKSM) was held. The demand to introduce changes in the CPU's program regarding forms and methods of the "class struggle," the "recognition of Ukrainian statehood," and the reality of the mixed economy were mentioned as the main differences between the UKSM and CPU.

There is not yet an open dispute among the CPU's highest leaders, with the exception of the leader of the Crimean Communists and speaker of the Crimean Rada, Leonid Hrach. Immediately after the announcement of the presidential election results, he confirmed his intention to campaign for the presidency in 2004. Hrach did not speak out against the 16 April referendum. And he did not attend the Fifth Congress of the CPU, citing his obligation to welcome to Crimea the delegation of the People's Republic of China, which was led by Lee Pen.

The Fifth Congress of the CPU (June 2000) did not bring much that was new. Proposals to speak about the "new CPU" instead of the "re-established CPU" did not pass (although it was initially suggested in the congress's draft declaration; opponents of the suggestion argued that it would have been tacit compliance with the ban on the CPU in 1991). The terminological dispute was revealing: it is still not possible to talk about the new CPU. Kuchma's administration can be satisfied by the results of the Fifth Congress: It is easier to fight a non-reformed Communist Party.[24]

In contrast to the Communist Party, the SPU decided to expand its social base. The Eighth Congress (May 2000) adopted a new version of the SPU's program. It was emphasized that the SPU (describing itself as a "left-centrist" force) reflected, first of all, the interests of the hired laborers (which included "qualified specialists," those who "have skills connected with complicated labor activity—the so-called "new middle class"). Furthermore, the SPU claimed that it was in solidarity with those entrepreneurs and managers who work "on legal grounds."[25] The SPU's leaders then stressed that talking about a union with Russia was complicated, given that it would actually be a union with Russian oligarchs.

Finding himself under pressure from the Left and the Right, Moroz again established that there "were more commonalities than differences in the politics between the Communists, Social Democrats, and Socialists."[26] Thus, by its self-identification, the SPU was located in an intermediate position between the Communists and the traditional western Social Democrats. In this sense, the SPU reminds one of the "new" French Communist Party or the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) from Germany. With this, the SPU preserves enough potential for evolving toward a left social democracy. It is symbolic that the Ninth Congress of the CPU (November 2001) received greetings from French Socialists, as well as German, Swedish, and Polish Social Democrats.

It is a fact, though, that the SPU voted to confirm Anatoly Kinakh, whom Kuchma recommended to take Yushchenko's place for the post of prime minister. But the Socialists claimed that Kinakh appeared to be the "lesser evil" in com-

parison with the candidates proposed by the oligarchic factions. Furthermore, given that Kinakh is dependent on the president, Kuchma will not be able to shirk responsibility from the results of his own policy. Many right-wing politicians were not convinced of that. Nevertheless, several of them evaluated the SPU's position as realistic enough (in particular, Taras Chornovil, son of Vyacheslav Chornovil, the previous leader of Rukh, who died in a car accident).

Since the presidential campaign, Socialists have been building ties with some center-left (SDPU) and even center-right ("Forward, Ukraine") opposition forces. They also signed a cooperation agreement with the Ukrainian Komsomol (UKSM). Thus, the Ukrainian democratic forces have a good chance of being structured around the center-right (Yushchenko) and center-left (Moroz). The paradox lies in the fact that although Moroz and his supporters are drifting to the right, it is possible that it will be necessary for them to use a rather leftist rhetoric to take votes away from the Communists and those oligarchic factions that declare themselves to be center-left.

In this context it is possible to assess the SPU's curtsies toward the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF). The fact remains that the Ukrainian Communists appear less ideologically flexible than the CPRF, and Socialists attempt to present themselves in front of the Communist electorate as the CPRF's best partner in Ukraine. This tactic seems to be risky, taking into account the CPRF leaders' chauvinistic statements, which could discredit the Ukrainian Socialists.[27]

Together with the Bat'kivshchyna Party (headed by the charismatic Yulia Tymoshenko),[28] the Socialists appeared to be the main supporters of a referendum for no confidence in President Kuchma and for the redistribution of power to the advantage of the parliament, in particular, to ensure the government's responsibility toward the parliament. According to sociological surveys conducted in May 2001, in the case of a referendum, 84.6 percent of voters would have participated and 62.6 percent would have voted for Kuchma's resignation.[29] According to the Ukrainian Constitution, however, the referendum would not have had legal consequences. In addition, the authorities undoubtedly would use all administrative levers to guarantee results in their favor. The real constellation of forces will be shown in the parliamentary elections in March 2002. Some analysts stress that the optimum situation within the future Rada would be the unification of the democratic forces with Yushchenko as president, Moroz as speaker, and Tymoshenko as prime minister.[30] With this in mind, it seems to be best for Yushchenko in the parliamentary elections to search for a compromise with the president that would guarantee at least Kuchma's neutrality. Otherwise, a strong propagandist machine would be used against Yushchenko, as occurred with Moroz in 1998–99.

Prospects

The outlook for reform in Ukraine remains uncertain. Some analysts state that in this situation it is necessary to form a broad movement based on such common principles as fostering democracy, moving toward Europe, and counteracting the

oligarchs. Others stress that it is imperative to focus efforts on structuring the political spectrum to secure a precise outline of the center-left and center-right forces.

Undoubtedly, the niche for the rise of strong center-left social democratic structures exists, and this niche has yet to be filled. The reasons for that are wide ranging: the social democratic traditions after seventy years of the Soviet regime were lost; civil society and independent trade unions are weak; society distrusts parties; there is no middle class; there have been sharp reductions in GDP, which in post-war Western Europe was traditionally redistributed by social democracts; and three camps on Ukraine's political arena have come to dominate (before the start of "tapegate"): the orthodox Left (Communists); not yet ideologically clearly defined national-democrats; and the nomenklatura-oligarchic groups within the "party of power."

In 1997, Andrew Wilson observed that because the CPU appeared to be the strongest force on the Left, the restructuring of this flank depended on the CPU's position. It remains to be seen who could lead the CPU's movement toward the left center. The Communist Party continues to present itself as a monolithic and well-disciplined structure. The situation after the 1999 elections showed that the CPU could have played an important and, in certain instances, a positive role such as counteracting the oligarchs. Nevertheless the CPU has played up to them in a variety of situations, as in the presidential elections, because of the specific character of the interests of its leaders and parliamentary faction, the orthodox moods among the rank-and-file members, and an overestimation of its own role.

Each of the elections showed the limits of electoral support for the Communists. On the eve of the 2002 parliamentary elections the authorities could effectively use their traditional tactics of dividing the Communist electorate using populist "phantom" parties such as the PSPU, SelPU, and CPRS. In the 1998 elections, the SelPU formed a bloc with the Socialists. At present, SelPU is allying with the CPRS, and it could thus weaken the Socialists' position in the countryside and take a part of the CPU's votes as well.

The Socialists and their leader, Moroz, suffered a range of serious defeats, starting with his failure to win the position of speaker in 1998. The situation in the left-center is getting more complicated: Besides the traditional Left parties, this electorate could be divided by SDPU(o); another oligarchic association with left-centrist slogans, "Labor Ukraine"; the "Justice" Party that broke from the SPU in the beginning of 2000, and so forth. Moreover, because of administrative pressure and, thus, isolation of the SPU from the mass media, it appears that the SPU now faces the task of overcoming the 4 percent threshold. Nevertheless, it is too early to write off Moroz and his party.

In comparison with Kuchma, Moroz undoubtedly appears much more democratically inclined. As speaker, Moroz was able to secure the compromises necessary for acceptance of the 1996 constitution. It was he who announced from the Rada's podium the tapes allegedly demonstrating Kuchma's violations of democracy (Symonenko did not take this step). Moroz, like Yushchenko, has the reputation of a decent human being, not tainted by corruption. Nonetheless, like other

Socialist leaders, he often overestimates the strength of the SPU and the opposition. The Socialist Party also does not have enough experience in relations with the West, especially the United States.

In the struggle for the social democratic niche, a key issue is who will fill it quicker: the SPU or the SDPU(o). I mentioned previously that the "united social democrats" did not defend the political and social rights of the workers. When the SPU was founded in fall 1991, it also had strong ties with the nomenklatura, but then they were noticeably weakened, and the SPU started to establish contacts with emerging medium business. In the end, social democracy in Central-Eastern Europe, for the most part, also came out of the Communist nomenklatura. The SPU's place in the opposition will make the party much more effective than the SDPU(o) in defending the rights of hired workers and the middle class.

An important factor for the evolution of the SDPU(o) from the right and the SPU's evolution from the left toward social democracy may be whom the Socialist International recognizes as the main partner in Ukraine. The paradox lies in the fact that if the Socialist International recognizes as its partner the SDPU(o), that will further weaken the stimuli for its actual social democratization.

The Western experience of bringing the Social Democrats to power promises no ill for Moroz and his party. François Mitterand lost to Charles de Gaulle in 1965. In 1971, when he became a head of the French Socialist Party (PSF), the party was in a deep crisis and yielded considerably to its "elder partner" in the left coalition, the Communists. Mitterand brought the Left to victory in 1981, but then pushed the Communists to the side. As a matter of fact, the Ukrainian Communists feared that Moroz would have done the same had he won in 1999.

Thus, the scenarios for future development of the Left are the following:

- Continuation of the present stagnation. The left-center camp is split and squeezed between the oligarchic SDPU(o) and the unreformed CPU.
- The SDPU(o) fills the social-democratic niche, mimicking social democracy and further discrediting it.

More optimistic are the following possibilities:

- In the long run, forces that are evolving toward social democracy not only in words but also in practice come out of the united social democrats. At some stage, this part of the SDPU(o) may join with other forces in this spectrum, including the SPU. At present, this kind of development is highly unlikely because of the "clan" character of the SDPU(o).
- The SPU continues to drift toward social democracy and creates a coalition with other left-centrists and even centrist forces.

A specific variant within this scenario is connected to the reform of the CPU. Its model could be, if not the PDS, the Communist Party of China (uniting market economy with "national communism").

The West could try to support the evolution of the Left to the center. Making the 2002 electoral campaign transparent and providing equal access to mass media could benefit the SPU. The long-term approach should include educating

the young generation of Socialists.[32] Western foundations could fund the publication of a Ukrainian non-party journal with a social democratic orientation.[33] Finally, more active involvement of the Socialist International, its ties with SPU and other social democratic groups, will be very important. All of this will be helpful for the emergence of a "Ukrainian Kwasniewski" and the creation of a strong Ukrainian social democracy. Such development within the Left will benefit, not threaten, Ukrainian statehood and democracy.

NOTES

In this article, I describe the situation on the eve of the campaign that began on 1 January 2002 for the parliamentary elections to be held on 31 March 2002. An earlier version was presented at the Sixth World Congress of Central and East European Studies, Tampere, August 2000. I am grateful to Susan Sypko for helping with the English translation.

1. Dmitri Furman, ed., *Ukraina i Rossiia: obshchestva i gosudarstva* (Moscow: Prava cheloveka, 1997), 205.

2. Herbert Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies: Theoretical Propositions," *Party Politics* 1, no. 4 (1995): 449.

3. *Komunist*, no. 27 (2000); no. 29 (1998).

4. *Komunist*, no. 29 (1998); *Politychni partii Ukrainy: dovidnyk* (Kyiv: KIS, 1998), 497.

5. *Politychni partii Ukrainy*, 384, 390, 395; Volodymyr Ruban, ed., *Naperedodni. Vybory 1999* (Kyiv, 1999), 33.

6. *Politychni partii Ukrainy*, 98, 107–111; *Holos Ukrainy* 31. VIII (1999).

7. *Tovarysh*, no. 23 (2000).

8. *Holos Ukrainy* 15. II; 21. III (1996).

9. *Komunist*, no. 20 (1997); *Holos Ukrainy* 31. VIII (1999).

10. It is a play on words, in that the abbreviation of this name (CPRS) coincides with the Ukrainian abbreviation of the "Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

11. Svitlana Kononchuk and Yuri Plesiuk, comp., *Komunistychna partiya Ukrainy* (Kyiv: UNCPD, 1998), 235–36; *Holos Ukrainy* 3. VII (1999). On the position of the Ukrainian Left during the Kosovo crisis, see Oleksiy Haran', *Der Krieg um das Kosovo und die Haltung der Ukraine,* Aktuelle Analysen, no. 18 (Köeln: Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien) 1999.

12. *Holos Ukrainy* 26. V (1999).

13. *Holos Ukrainy* 17. VIII (1999).

14. *Tovarysh*, no. 25 (1997).

15. *Tovarysh*, no. 23 (2000).

16. Taras Kuzio presented this point of view at the conference called "Ukraine: First Ten Years of Independence" (Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien, Cologne, 11–13 May 2000.)

17. Andrew Wilson and Sarah Birch, "Voting Stability, Political Gridlock: Ukraine's 1998 Parliamentary Elections," *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 1 (1999): 1040, 1060.

18. Figures from the author's own calculations based on the data of the Secretariat of the Verkhovna Rada.

19. Poll conducted by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation.

20. Andrew Wilson, "Reiventing the Ukrainian Left: Assessing Adaptability and Change," *Slavonic and East European Review*, Jan. 2002 (forthcoming). For an abridged variant of this article see Andrew Wilson, "The Long March of the Ukrainian Left: Backwards Towards Communism, Sideways to Social Democracy or Forwards to Socialism?" *The Masaryk Journal* 3, no. 1 (2000): 122–40.

21. Valerii Khmelko, "Osoblyvosti elektorativ livykh," in *Ukrains'ki livi: mizh leninizmom i sotsial-demokratijeiu*, ed. Olexiy Haran' and Oleksandr Maiboroda (Kyiv: KM

Academia, 2000), 212–13.

22. For details see Adrian Karatnycky, "Meltdown in Ukraine," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 3 (2001): 73–86.

23. *Komunist*, no. 49 (1999); no. 26 (2000).

24. By the end of 2001 the rhetoric of the Communists leaders softened a little. For example, instead of mentioning "Marxism–Leninism" they are speaking about "the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin." Development of relations with the EU is seen to be compatible with relations with Russia. These minor overtones, however, should not be overestimated. In general, Communist propaganda remains quite orthodox.

25. *Tovarysh*, no. 23 (2000).

26. Ibid.

27. For more details see *Ukrains'ki livi*, 67, 171; Joan Urban, "The Communist Parties of Russia and Ukraine on the Eve of the 1999 Election: Similarities, Contrasts, and Interaction," *Demokratizatsiya. The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 7, no. 1 (1998): 111–34.

28. An illustrative example of the paradoxes of Ukrainian politics is that proreform Premier Yushchenko appointed Yulia Tymoshenko, former close ally of the corrupt prime minister Lazarenko, as vice premier for energy. Currently, however, a weakened Tymoshenko is considered by many analysts a lesser evil than clans associated with the SDPU(o), led Victor Medvedchuk, and the Democratic Union Party, led by Oleksandr Volkov. During her short time as vice premier, Tymoshenko received quite good reviews by Western experts. Kuchma soon removed her and then even imprisoned her on charges of corruption in 1996–1997, but she was freed after a storm of protests.

29. *Dzerkalo tyzhnia,* 9 June 2001.

30. Surveys from the first half of 2001 showed that Yushchenko led in the ratings. Especially important for Ukrainian politics was that he had support not only in the west and center of Ukraine but also in the Russified regions in the east and the south of the country.

31. Andrew Wilson, "The Ukrainian Left: In Transition to Social Democracy or Still in Thrall to the USSR?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 49, no. 7 (1997): 1310.

32. One of the perspective young politicians, Vitalij Lutsenko, was former deputy minister of science and technology. Despite good prospects for his career within the present regime, he joined the SPU, and became one of the leaders of the "Ukraine without Kuchma" movement.

33. Famous Ukraine intellectuals and Social Democrats by conviction (such as the philosopher and first leader of Rukh, Myroslav Popovych, and Valerii Khmelko, sociologist and one of the leaders of the Democratic platform in the CPU in 1990–1991) who are not currently affiliated with any party could be on the editorial board.