

# Ukraine: Totalitarian Legacy of Maidan

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*In November 2013, after Ukrainian **President Yanukovych** refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU due to its onerous conditions, members of non-governmental organizations funded by grants from Western foundations (popularly called “grant eaters”) brought their supporters to the Maidan demanding signing this agreement. Leftist organizations, including the [Union of Anarchists of Ukraine](#) (SAU), were initially wary of these protests. Everyone remembered the results of the first Maidan in 2004 and the Yushchenko regime which oversaw the fall of the economy and the standard of living of ordinary citizens, accompanied by the growing influence of nationalist ultra-right organizations.*

Nevertheless, following the techniques of “color revolutions”, repeatedly tested in the Third World countries, slogans of grassroots self-organization, priorities of local self-government, social demands to reduce prices and utility rates were thrown into Ukrainian society at the first stage of the protests. Therefore, leftist organizations could not stay away from such protests and were present at the first stage of the Maidan in the fall of 2013. In particular, anarchists from the SAU in Kiev, Vasilkov and Korosten were active there. At the headquarters of the Union of Anarchists, Odessa, where two rival camps—Maidan and Anti-Maidan—were formed, anarchists pursued a policy of uniting the forces of both movements to take local power under public control. This was the only case in Ukraine when Maidan and Anti-Maidan, on our initiative, put forward general requirements for the City Council regarding its subordination to the interests of citizens.

Subsequent events showed that democratic and social slogans were only a bait for the accumulation of the protest electorate. At the second stage of the Maidan starting in January 2014, the leading role in the protests began to be played by [ultra-right, radical nationalist organizations](#) such as Right Sector, White Hammer, All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), which, unlike the leftists, were well funded by oligarchs and Western funds and had their own [militant training camps](#). In a series of skirmishes, they squeezed leftist organizations out of the protest camp and subsequently became the [shock force](#) of the coup d’état. Without militant radical nationalists, the peaceful majority of the protesters would have been incapable of overthrowing the Yanukovych regime. SAU groups also left the Maidan, but some of the anarchists remained on their own initiative. Subsequently, one of them, Sergei Kemsy from Korosten, was killed by a sniper and ranked among the [Heavenly Hundred](#).

But the key role in the coup was played not by ultra-right militants, but by pressure from [Western embassies](#) and international organizations, which held back the government from dispersing the protests by force. As a result, after the [shootings](#) on the Maidan on February 20, 2014, in which the opposing sides accuse each other, the president and protest leaders signed a peace memorandum under the guarantees of the Western ambassadors, and

Yanukovych withdrew the police forces. However, the Maidan immediately violated the agreement, seized government buildings and [forced](#) Yanukovych to flee.

The coup in Kiev was followed by a chain reaction of events in other parts of Ukraine. Russia took advantage of the complete rejection of nationalism and the Maidan in Crimea and, with the support of the local population, annexed the peninsula. After Donetsk and Luhansk [revolted](#) in a protest against the illegal authorities of the Maidan, the putschists sent troops there to quell the unrest, and thus began the so-called anti-terrorist operation – the war in Donbass. In other cities in southeastern Ukraine, where anti-Maidan sentiments were also strong, protests were quickly suppressed. In Odessa, the opponents of Maidan were dealt with most cruelly, with 48 anti-Maidan supporters [burned to death](#) in the House of Trade Unions in May 2014.

After the triumph of the new regime, which came to power not as a result of free elections, but through a coup d'état, its true face quickly began to show itself. Under the beautiful slogans of embracing “European values” and a high standard of living in the EU for ordinary Ukrainians, the Maidan regime actually pursued the goal of economic absorption of our country by Western capital with the help of the dependent comprador bourgeoisie placed and under the control of the embassies of NATO countries.

**This can be clearly seen in the neoliberal [shock doctrine](#) reforms of 2014-16.** There was a deliberate destruction of our economy in order to firmly take Ukraine under the control of Western governments and corporations. The severing of old economic ties in the east as a result of the conflict with Russia and the conditions of a free trade zone with the EU led to the bankruptcy and closure of many Ukrainian enterprises. They were sold for a pittance to western investors. The devastation of the banking system erased the last savings of the Ukrainians. According to Trump’s lawyer Giuliani, President Poroshenko, with the help of American partners, [laundered billions](#) of US dollars from the country, 70% of which allegedly went to his patrons. With such a fall in the economy and galloping inflation, the broad masses of the population were left without jobs and livelihood.

**Other [reforms](#) dictated by the IMF froze wages and pensions in Ukraine, while prices and utility rates [rose 6-7 times](#).** As a result, over 60% of the population was thrown below the poverty line. The rise in prices and utilities together with the depreciation of labor was accompanied by the dismantling of the institutions of the social state — free education, medicine, and social security — inherited from the USSR. This also came as additional costs as the Ukrainians were rapidly becoming impoverished. Health care has become inaccessible to the mass of the population, who, as a result, simply abandoned it, forced to make do only with emergency help. Perhaps this is a common situation in Third World countries. But for the Ukrainians, who until the Maidan continued to use the remnants of social guarantees from the times of the USSR, it was a sudden and violent defeat of their socio-economic space and habitat.

The government was forced to create a system of utility subsidies, but it was designed for the lowest level of low-income citizens who could not physically pay for the high utility rates. The majority of citizens, whose income slightly exceeded the established level, were forced to pay the full cost, thereby working solely to cover utilities and food. Instead of the European standard of living promised on the Maidan, Ukrainians received poverty and social and labor lawlessness. The apotheosis of the cynicism of this process was the appeal to foreign investors by [Leshchenko](#), the well-known «grant-eater» and at that time already the deputy of the Rada, to invest money in Ukraine, because through the efforts of the

government, our labor force had depreciated so much that for a measly 300 dollars Ukrainians would be ready to toil away not to starve to death.

Of course, such a policy of destroying the economy and devaluing the labor force with rising prices and utility rates caused widespread discontent among the working masses of Ukrainians. And to prevent the protests from spilling out into the streets, thus spoiling in the eyes of the world community a fictitious picture of universal support for the Maidan and neoliberal reforms in Ukraine, the [ultra-right neo-Nazi organizations](#) that participated in the coup came in handy for the Poroshenko regime. Having declared themselves patriots, they began to [fight](#) against any manifestations of social protest, practically suppressing the left movement in Ukraine. Many right-wing radicals had a status of non-staff personnel of law enforcement agencies or [worked](#) under the direct control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the SBU. From the outside, the situation looked like street clashes of two points of view in Ukrainian society, that is, a formally democratic process. But in reality, an illegal continuation of the police state was operating under the cover of ultra-right formations.

This suppression of any disagreement with the predatory policy of the Maidan regime was helped by the law on [decommunization](#), as well as the war in Donbass. Formally, the law condemned the totalitarian regimes in the USSR and Germany, but in fact, activists of ultra-right organizations with Nazi symbols and with complete inaction of the police, or even under police protection, attacked left-wing actions under the pretext of decommunization and the fight [against Soviet symbols](#). And the war in Donbass made it possible to declare any social protests as intrigues of the Kremlin to undermine the Ukrainian rear, and to harshly suppress them as treason. In particular, this was how our rally against the growth of railway fares was dispersed, and after an attack on the rally on the Day of the Liberation of Odessa from Nazism on April 10, 2016, I was hospitalized with a complex fracture of my leg. Of course, the police have never investigated such attacks on citizens disloyal to the “pro-European government”.

As a result of such harassment and unofficial repressions, as well as the de facto ban on funding for social activity, the leftist movement in Ukraine practically collapsed. Many cells and entire parties ceased their activities, fearing for their lives; some fled the country, others switched sides to the ultra-right camp.

Another area of sharp confrontation in Ukrainian society was the language and cultural policy of the Maidan regime. A good half of the country's population are Russian speakers – citizens who for generations communicated here in their native language and then officially became founders of an independent Ukrainian state. Yet, their cultural rights became the target of a total offensive by this state, represented by the power of the putschists, through the universal [Ukrainianization](#) of administration, education, service sector and information field. In 21st century Europe, with its multiculturalism and free development of regional languages, an ugly doctrine of cultural monopoly came to reign in Ukraine. Such a policy of extreme nationalism provoked intense resistance in cities and regions where other cultures predominated, but it enjoyed the support of external management as an element of the transformation of our country into Anti-Russia — a completely antagonistic society with an alien culture. Thus, not only economic, but also cultural interests of Ukrainian citizens were sacrificed to the geopolitical plans of the Euro-Atlantic community.

In this atmosphere of nationalist harassment and ultra-right terror on the streets, with the full control of the media, the putschists held parliamentary and local elections in 2014 and

2015. The purity and democratic nature of these elections were assessed by the same non-governmental organizations funded by Western grants, as well as observers from NATO countries, which openly supported the Maidan coup. Therefore, the elections were recognized as lawful, and the new authorities as legitimate. But despite all these manipulations, even the polls, dependent on the Maidan regime, could not hide the catastrophic lack of confidence of citizens in the authorities they allegedly chose. In 2018, the president had 16% of support, the government 11%, and the parliament 8%.

Therefore, despite the apparent victory of the Poroshenko regime over the multinational Ukrainian society, no amount of repression could hide the acute discontent of the impoverished masses with this power. As a result, thanks to the protest electorate, the winner of the presidential elections in 2019 became a media character [Zelensky](#). He had no relation to the regime and, on the contrary, was a well-known comedian-showman, who for many years performed with moderate political satire. But here, too, the Ukrainians fell into a political trap: the discredited power of the poorly disguised right-wing terror was replaced by unsullied “white collars,” who, however, turned out to be even more dependent on external rule and control by Western embassies.



Such a big victory for Zelensky with 73% of support, which accumulated all the existing dissatisfaction with the Poroshenko regime, was unexpected even for the organizers of his project. Hence, for the early parliamentary elections, announced immediately thereafter, they created a virtual party “[Servant of the People](#),” named after the popular TV series starring Zelensky as President of Ukraine. This new party recruited complete amateurs, with zero experience in politics. But the real control behind the facade of these “new faces” was carried out by Western foundations and think tanks. The street terror of the ultra-right groups was curtailed, but practically none of the militants received any punishment; some of them, like C14, re-branded and switched to “sleep mode” until the time when they are needed again by the comprador regime.

However, during Poroshenko’s rule, **all opposition organizations, including the left movement, were thoroughly crushed**. And most importantly, in a country with an oligarchic economy and a poorly disguised right-wing dictatorship, there are neither powerful trade unions nor independent foundations that could support with resources the restoration of social activity and revival of the left movement for the labor and social rights of ordinary Ukrainians. And the parties of the parliamentary opposition are funded by the same big capital as the parties in the Maidan camp; therefore, they are vulnerable to the pressure of the collective West and are forced to negotiate without taking real steps to restore Ukraine’s independence and increase the well-being of its citizens.

The culmination of this external rule — and a clear indication of the cleansing of the left — was the adoption of the new [law](#) on March 31, 2020 which lifted the moratorium on the sale

of agricultural land. Despite the fact that this was the last strategic resource of Ukraine, with the transfer of which into the hands of foreign capital the country would finally turn into a colony, the collusion of the elites allowed this law to be passed through parliament without any opposition under the pretext of quarantine, and there was no independent force to bring the Ukrainians on the streets to fight economic occupation.

With such a situation in the political and social sphere, aggravated by the consequences of the pandemic and a new collapse of GDP associated with it, on the eve of the local elections in October 2020, the Zelensky regime is not afraid to once again raise utility rates and continue the sale of the country's assets, granting concessions for ports and preparing the [privatization](#) of Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian railways). Libertarianism, declared as the ideology of his party, has in fact the most vulgar and primitive character as the liberation of society from state interference means the sale of the country's last assets and a simultaneous tightening of labor and social legislation.

Therefore, while the upcoming local elections in October 2020 may present some advance, they will not fundamentally change the political situation in Ukraine. The Servant of the People party will get its share of the seats simply as the president's force, as the party in power. The conditionally anti-Maidan parliamentary [opposition](#) represented by the [Opposition Platform For Life](#)(OPZZh) party will gain more percentages in the local councils of South-Eastern Ukraine. A new phenomenon is the party of media expert and emigrant [Shariy](#) (Political Party of Shariy, PPSH), which actively speaks out on the streets against the Zelensky regime and ultra-right activists of the National Corps. It also has a chance to create factions in a number of local councils. However, the PPSH is mainly a media political project and so far, the bright politicians of this party on the ground, whom Shariy plans to bring to the local government, have not been presented. This is holding back the growth of its electorate.

As long as Ukraine remains under external control, and civil society here is run by Western funds, the majority in the local councils of the western and central provinces will be occupied by the parties in the Maidan camp, like Poroshenko's [European Solidarity](#) or [Voice](#) (Golos). These provinces are more nationalistic, their electorate does not trust the conventionally pro-Russian OPZZh and PPSH, and there are no left-wing parties to protect the interests of local workers in the country. A certain percentage of the seats will be taken by the parties of local elites, each in its own city or province: one attempt to unite such projects was the so-called party of mayors "Proposition." Another common problem for all new parties is the so-called [franchise](#) principle, when spots on local ballots are sold under a party brand promoted in the media. Thus, politics is not changed by the efforts of like-minded groups; instead, elections are viewed as a business project in which entrepreneurs pay to obtain mandates in order to increase their income through participation in power.

In the seventh year of post-Maidan Ukraine, we have to admit that under the slogans of the struggle for democracy and "European choice," a coup and the subsequent externally-controlled comprador regime have created a political system and a socio-economic situation that are completely hostile to the overwhelming majority of the country's citizens. All these years, the Ukrainian state has been purposefully confiscating the social achievements of past years, narrowing the rights and freedoms of citizens of the country, depriving them of any prospects to get out of poverty and lawlessness. After the violent seizure of power, including law enforcement and oversight bodies, the Ukrainian society has lost any opportunity to control politics in its own country and elections of their own government. Now they are controlled by Western embassies and think tanks, the so-called "curators", as well

as non-governmental organizations sponsored by grants from Western foundations, which thus act as agents of influence that promote external interests.

Moreover, embassies and foundations do not hesitate to publicly dictate their will in a supposedly independent Ukraine. They openly support certain officials or activists – to the point that on June 18, 2020, before the court hearing on the election of a measure of restraint for ex-President Poroshenko, the US Embassy [issued](#) a statement on the inadmissibility of settling political scores through the system of justice. And on June 19, G7 ambassadors spoke out against the [resignation](#) of the head of the National Bank, Smoliy, who was involved in the withdrawal of billions from the country, which Trump's lawyer spoke about. The interference of external management in the internal affairs of Ukraine has reached the point that, according to the latest memorandum with the IMF, the government is obliged to reduce the number of schools in the country.

State agitprop continues to ceaselessly broadcast about democratic achievements after the Maidan. But in reality, democracy, that is, the power of the people in Ukraine, has been turned into a fiction. The country is ruled by a poorly covered dictatorship of big business, based on ultra-right street gangs, which are an informal continuation of the police state. We live in a society of right-wing totalitarianism, where socio-economic and political conditions are formed by the interests of external management and foreign investors. On the global market, Ukraine is assigned the role of a supplier of cheap labor and plantations for transnational corporations. Therefore, the release from external control is a mandatory step towards reorienting the state from the demands of Western «curators» to the interests of its own citizens.

In such conditions, voters would find appealing a left-wing political project that protects the rights of workers and socially unprotected categories of the population, teaching them technologies of mutual aid and joint survival in times of crisis. But one of the main results of the neoliberal reforms was the final monopolization of media and financial resources in the hands of the oligarchy. Under the control of Western «curators», there are neither powerful trade unions nor independent social funds in the country, and the extremely impoverished population cannot support such a project with their own contributions. While with serious promotion efforts, it could win up to 30% of the vote in devastated Ukraine, political investors of such a project should have a completely different vision of the future of the country and its population – a multitude of independent and proactive workers, capable of raising production and pulling the economy out of a debt pit.

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