

Western aggression: How the US and Britain are intervening in Ukraine's elections

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Global Research, November 10, 2004

[The Spectator](#) 5 November 2004

A few years ago, a friend of mine was sent to Kiev by the British government to teach Ukrainians about the Western democratic system. His pupils were young reformers from western Ukraine, affiliated to the Conservative party. When they produced a manifesto containing 15 pages of impenetrable waffle, he gently suggested boiling their electoral message down to one salient point. What was it, he wondered? A moment of furrowed brows produced the lapidary and nonchalant reply, 'To expel all Jews from our country.'

It is in the west of Ukraine that support is strongest for the man who is being vigorously promoted by America as the country's next president: the former prime minister Viktor Yushchenko. On a rainy Monday morning in Kiev, I met some young Yushchenko supporters, druggy skinheads from Lvov. They belonged both to a Western-backed youth organisation, Pora, and also to Ukrainian National Self-Defence (Unso), a semi-paramilitary movement whose members enjoy posing for the cameras carrying rifles and wearing fatigues and balaclava helmets. Were nutters like this to be politically active in any country other than Ukraine or the Baltic states, there would be instant outcry in the US and British media; but in former Soviet republics, such bogus nationalism is considered anti-Russian and therefore democratic.

It is because of this ideological presupposition that Anglo-Saxon reporting on the Ukrainian elections has chimed in with press releases from the State Department, peddling a fairytale about a struggle between a brave and beleaguered democrat, Yushchenko, and an authoritarian Soviet nostalgic, the present Prime Minister, Viktor Yanukovich. All facts which contradict this morality tale are suppressed. Thus a story has been widely circulated that Yushchenko was poisoned during the electoral campaign, the fantasy being that the government was trying to bump him off. But no British or American news outlet has reported the interview by the chief physician of the Vienna clinic which treated Yushchenko for his unexplained illness. The clinic released a report declaring there to be no evidence of poisoning, after which, said the chief physician, he was subjected to such intimidation by Yushchenko's entourage — who wanted him to change the report — that he was forced to seek police protection.

It has also been repeatedly alleged that foreign observers found the elections fraught with violations committed by the government. In fact, this is exclusively the view of highly politicised Western governmental organisations like the OSCE — a body which is notorious for the fraudulent nature of its own reports, and which in any case came to this conclusion before the poll had even taken place — and of bogus NGOs, such as the Committee of Ukrainian Voters, a front organisation exclusively funded by Western (mainly American)

government bodies and think-tanks, and clearly allied with Yushchenko. Because they speak English, the political activists in such organisations can easily nobble Anglophone Western reporters.

Contrary allegations — such as those of fraud committed by Yushchenko-supporting local authorities in western Ukraine, carefully detailed by Russian election observers but available only in Russian — go unreported. So too does evidence of crude intimidation made by Yushchenko supporters against election officials. The depiction is so skewed that Yushchenko is presented as a pro-Western free-marketeer, even though his fief in western Ukraine is an economic wasteland; while Yanukovych is presented as pro-Russian and statist, even though his electoral campaign is based on deregulation and the economy has been growing at an impressive clip. The cleanliness and prosperity of Kiev and other cities have improved noticeably.

There is, however, one thing which separates the two main candidates, and which explains the West's determination to shoo in Yushchenko: Nato. Yanukovych has said he is against Ukraine joining; Yushchenko is in favour. The West wants Ukraine in Nato to weaken Russia geopolitically and to have a new big client state for expensive Western weaponry, whose manufacturers fund so much of the US political process.

Yanukovych has also promised to promote Russian back to the status of second state language. Since most Ukrainian citizens speak Russian, since Kiev is the historic birthplace of Christian Russia, and since the current legislation forces tens of millions of Russians to Ukrainianise their names, this is hardly unreasonable. The continued artificial imposition of Ukrainian as the state language — started under the Soviets and intensified after the fall of communism — will be a further factor in ripping Ukraine's Russophone citizens away from Russia proper. That is why the West wants it.

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