

A b s t r a c t s

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Elections in Ukraine and Poland

Rainer Lindner

Post-Revolutionary Reality

Ukraine Needs a Stable Government

At the end of September 2007, an early election took place in Ukraine. The election met the standards of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the Council of Europe. The constitution of the parliament and the government as well as the redistribution of financial resources are underway. Any government will be able to stabilise itself only if it moves the opposition to constructive co-operation. Ukraine urgently needs reforms. The “intensified partnership” with the European Union and Ukraine’s responsibility as a regional power that provides order could serve as anchors of stability. Stability is needed to drive forward the country’s modernisation process.

Mykola Riabchuk

Ukraine’s Forced Pluralism

Communicating Tubes and Other Laws

In Ukraine, there exists an unstable pluralism. Since 1992, the competing elites have failed either to secure an authoritarian system, or to consolidate democracy. Responsibility for this lies with the dysfunctional institutions, a weak society, and the fragmentation of elites. The last attempt to consolidate democracy, which followed the Orange Revolution, failed because the elites missed their chance to create new structures of power and democratic procedures. But the great service of the “orange revolutionaries” remains the re-establishment of contact between society and the elites – in a way not unlike communicating tubes. The results of the early election provide an opportunity to make another run at institutional reforms and rule of law.

Gerhard Simon

The Erosion of Post-Communism

Ukrainian Political Culture in Flux

Ukraine is neither a consolidated democracy, nor an authoritarian system. It remains in a post-Communist transitional stage and is struggling to find its way into the future. The post-Communist characteristics of the country's political culture are highly visible. The progress in overcoming this culture and the moves made in the direction of democracy are unmistakable. The constitution may well be disputed. That hinders the establishment of political institutions, which then end up a plaything for power-seeking interests. But Ukraine is the only country in the Commonwealth of Independent States where free and fair elections take place and freedom of the press reigns. A national consensus that includes an orientation towards the European Union is taking shape.

Peter Oliver Loew

The End of the "Fourth Republic"

The Outcome of the 2007 Polish Parliamentary Election

Donald Tusk's liberal-conservative Civic Platform emerged from the elections on October 21, 2007, as the clear winner, Jaroslaw Kaczyński's governing Law and Justice Party as the big loser. Tusk was able to boost his profile in a television duel with Kaczyński. Many younger, well-educated, urban voters were mobilised to unseat a government that had distinguished itself primarily through a polarising way of thinking in terms of enemies and an antiquated nationalist rhetoric. Kaczyński's project of clearing out "post-Communist insider relationships" and creating a renewed "fourth republic" is at an end. The "Poland of those who have made gains" has triumphed over the "Poland of those who are frustrated." The new government has the chance to overcome the inner conflicts of Polish society by means of a socially balanced policy and domestic reforms.

Alexandra Engelfried

Portrait of the President

Vladimir Putin between Art, Cult, and Commerce

Paintings with Putin's image are widespread in Russia. Putin portraits fetch high prices on the art market and have entered popular culture. Artists successfully use depictions of the president as part of their public relations strategies. At the same time, the demand for and use of such portraits express an understanding of rule and adoration of rulers that goes back to the

tsarist and Soviet traditions. This also goes for the language of forms and images used. The Putin cult has become a fixture of culture and politics in Russia.

Silvia Ručinská

Take Off or Forced Landing?

The Slovak Economy under the Fico Government

Several years ago, Slovakia created a furore with its radical economic reforms. Although the Slovak economy has grown with great speed since then, the reformers were unseated in June 2006. The new government promised a reform of the reforms: The unified tax rates were to be repealed and the labour market more strongly regulated. Social policy was to deserve the name again. A year after the parliamentary election, it is clear that the Fico government – berated abroad, but beloved in Slovakia – has at least not yet introduced a radical turnaround in economic policy.

Aleksei Levinson

The “L Phenomenon”

On the First Anniversary of the Death of Yurii Levada (1930–2006)

With the death of Yurii Levada on November 16, 2006, Russia lost one of its leading sociologists and opinion researchers, a researcher who maintained his independence of thought despite all of the state harassment directed against him and his academic work. Ousted from institutionalized academia, Levada in the 1970s gathered Moscow's dissident intelligentsia around him in informal seminars. No Soviet power, no Putin administration got in the way of the “L Phenomenon”: Levada's reputation as empirical social researcher and moral authority remained spotless. His life work is being continued by his former colleagues at the Levada Institute.

Manfred Sapper

Interference in Communication

Why Levada, Dubin & Gudkov Are Not Read

Yurii Levada, who died on November 16, 2006, was one of Russia's most important sociologists. In Germany, he remains largely unknown. The same finding goes for Lev Gudkov or Boris Dubin. They are present in Germany and are at the same time ignored. The reason for this lies in the specific hurdles blocking the transfer of scientific knowledge between Russia and the West. Precarious developments in academia also aggravate the situation. The destruction of specialised knowledge of Russia rooted in the social sciences at Germany's institutions of higher learning impedes academic and cultural dialogue with Russian thinkers in the most basic of ways.

Karlheinz Kasper

Terror of the Oprichniki or Dictatorship of the Vampires?

Vladimir Sorokin and Viktor Pelevin Warn of Russia's Future

After the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union, the search is underway for the origins of the downfall and signs of a new rise. Apologetic representations of the past or warnings against the continuation of failed experiments are appearing in Russian literature. Particularly in vogue at present are anti-utopias (dystopias) whose authors make use of very unfamiliar depictions of social realities. Among the outstanding works of this genre are the new novels *Den' oprichnika* by Vladimir Sorokin and *Empire "V"* by Viktor Pelevin.