

Summing up some conclusions from the election process

Vol. 4, No. 109, April 6, 1998

The opposition to the president and the government - i.e., those are likely to vote against the president's positions on a number of principle issues - received much more than 200 seats in the new parliament. There will be about 120 representatives of the Communist party in the new legislature, compared to 87 in the previous parliament. The Communists proved to be the most disciplined among the lawmakers: they showed remarkable solidarity when voting on a number of key issues.

The Socialist and the Peasant faction will number 35 persons, a slight reduction from 37 in the previous Verkhovna Rada. In addition, there will be 17 members of the Progressive Socialist party, whose members keep stressing their independence and difference from other left-wingers and may vote differently on a number of issues. The Hromada received 16 seats under the proportional system, and at least 14 more of its members and declaratively nonpartisan individuals with close connections to Hromada leader Pavlo Lazarenko won in majoritarian constituencies. In the previous Verkhovna Rada, the Yednist faction, controlled by Lazarenko, numbered 32 MPs.

Furthermore, there are at least five nonpartisan new MPs who are radically opposed to the executive branch, in particular, independent businessman and newspaper owner Mykhailo Brodsky and former mayor of Kyiv Leonid Kosakivsky.

On the other hand, there are 27 new MPs who associate themselves with the pro-presidential People's Democratic Party, 19 members of the Green party, 17 members of the Social-Democratic party (united), 7 members of the Agrarian party, 2 Liberals and 3 members of the Party of Reforms and Order. According to experts, this group may also include 8 nonpartisan MPs whose views make them more likely to cooperate with the "party of power" than with the opposition. All in all, there are about 130 members of these parties and movements in the new Verkhovna Rada.

In addition to 46 new members of parliament supported by the Ukrainian People's Movement Rukh, there are 9 MPs from the National Front and the Christian Democratic party and one member of the Democratic party. Most likely, this group will comprise a separate force in the new parliament, which will be in definite opposition only to Communists and Socialists. Therefore, representatives of the national democratic forces in the new parliament will number 56.

Businesses in the parliament

25 new MPs came to the parliament from structures of the executive branch, in addition to 25 businessmen whose businesses are directly linked to those structures. Political orientation of 55 more businessmen and other nonpartisan MPs is so far unclear. Probably, this group will become an object of eager attention of all parties, primarily the united Social Democrats, the Greens, Rukh and Hromada that have already started working towards building up their factions' ranks. Remarkably, party lists of the Communist party, the Socialist-peasant bloc and the Progressive Socialist party include names of at least 10 businessmen whose views and business interests hardly always match the declared party affiliation. Therefore, their voting patterns will largely depend on what steps will be made by the presidential administration towards nonpartisan MPs, as well as on their negotiations with Communists.

The internal divisions within the new parliament will become visible with the election of its leadership. Personalities of the new Speaker and his or her deputies will allow to judge about the prospects of the new parliament's relations with the president and the government, as well as about chances of some well-known politicians at the 1999 presidential election. It is likely that the election of the Speaker and two Deputy Speakers will create a dilemma for this parliament: although there are a number of politicians willing to occupy the positions, analysts believe that the most probable candidates for becoming a new Speaker are leader of the Communist party Petro Symonenko and one of the key members of the Communist party Borys Oliynyk. Although Oleksandr Moroz will do his best to be reelected as the Speaker, it may occur that President Kuchma will be much more willing to see his

political antipode as the chairman of the parliament. Borys Oliynyk's "pro-Ukrainian" position may, to a certain extent, encourage right-wingers to support him.

Ukrainian Voters' Election Sentiments

The election results suggest that the executive authorities exercise but relative control over the election process, notwithstanding the fact that most of political parties and blocs accuse the executive branch of influencing the course of the election campaign. The election victories of Mykhailo Brodsky and Leonid Kosakivsky, both determined opponents to the current power-holders, showed that public opinion is still worth something in this country. The election of candidates like Yevhen Leshan, 23, student of the Department of Journalism of the Tavrian Institute of Ecology and Politics and a member of the Communist party from the Crimea, and Olga Yukhymets, a teacher of history and social science from the Cherkasy region may also serve as an argument in favor of recognizing the election as democratic and fair.

According to the election results, ex-vice prime minister and reformer Victor Pynzenyk received personal support of less than one million of voters: his Party of Reforms and Order collected 831,517 votes (3.13%). Should the party join forces and votes with the Forward, Ukraine! election bloc (461,512 votes or 1.74%), the new structure would have probably overcome the 4% barrier.

Judging from the number of people who voted for the National Front, the number of supporters of their far right doctrine is about 720 thousand voters. Even more radical agenda of the Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA) was supported by only 105,829 voters (0.40%), noticeably less than the total of votes that had brought UNA leaders Oleg Vitovych, Yaroslav Ilyyasevych and Yuri Tyma to the previous parliament. Anti-Semitic and ultra-radical slogans of the Fewer Words bloc appealed to only 45 thousand of voters (0.17%).

Obviously pro-Union, though non-Communist message of the Soyuz ("Union") party attracted only 187 thousand voters. There were about 210 thousand individuals who chose the Social-Liberal Association SLOn which had built its message on pledging to secure official status for the Russian language and counted mainly on votes of Russian-speaking intelligentsia.

Therefore, the Ukrainian election has signified the end of the "clan" history of this country. The three former Communist party clans - Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk and Kharkiv-based - expanded beyond their "motherlands" and transformed into separate political parties.

"Old MPs or New MPs"

Of 224 members of the new, 14th Verkhovna Rada, elected on March 29, there are 90 members of the previous parliaments (40.18%). 77 of them (34.38%) are members of the 13th Verkhovna Rada, 12 (5.36%) were elected twice before, 6 (2.68%) were members of the 12th parliament, and one MP was previously member of the 11th, 12th and 13th parliaments. All in all, 354 members of the 13th Verkhovna Rada sought re-election. 294 of them tried luck individually in constituencies, and 248 competed for seats under the proportional system. Among the MPs, elected in constituencies, there are 114 (40.18%) nonpartisan deputies, 39 (34.38%) Communists, 14 (6.25%) members of Rukh, 11 (4.91%) members of the People's Democratic party, 8 members of the Agrarian party, 7 representatives of Hromada, 3 Christian Democrats, 3 Socialists, 3 members of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, 3 members of the Party of Reforms and Order, 2 representatives of the Soyuz, 2 members of the Peasants' party, 2 Progressive Socialists, 2 "united" Social Democrats and 2 Republicans. The Interregional Reform Bloc, the Liberal party, the Ukrainian Party of Justice, the Democratic party, the Social- Nationalist party, the Ukrainian Christian Democratic party and the Christian People's Union are represented by one MP each.

The largest "professional" group of the new MPs, elected in the constituencies are entrepreneurs and farmers (47 or 20.98%). 20 MPs are local officials, 18 managers, 12 social and culture workers, 10 NGO leaders, 5 officials of ministries and departments, 4 senior law-enforcement officers, a staff member of the presidential administration and a head of the regional state administration. 216 MPs (96.43%) have university or college degrees. Among the newly-elected MPs, 84 (37.5%) are engineers or builders by profession, 33 (14.73%) are economists and specialists in business administration, 31 (13.84%) are sociologists, political scientists and lawyers. The predominant majority of MPs, elected in

constituencies, 210 persons (93.75%) are men. Only 14 women managed to win the race in their constituencies. The most numerous age group are persons aged from 41 to 50 (116, or 51.79%), the group of 31 to 40-year olds rank second (52, or 23.21%), followed by 40 MPs aged 51 to 60, 10 MPs aged 61 to 70, 5 MPs under 30, and one MP aged 77.

The New Parliament's Face

The election has brought a number of new personalities to the parliament.

The Communist party received 6,550,268 votes (24.68%) and 84 seats in the parliament. Remarkably, it brought Stanislav Hurenko, the last first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Soviet Ukraine, back into active politics, this time as deputy director general of the Navasko joint venture. Another noteworthy fact is that Communists failed in some of their "traditional" bases of support. For instance, in the industrial town of Hartsyzsk, the Donetsk region, voters elected a professor of the State Academy of Management, while the Communist candidate came third in the race.

The Ukrainian People's Movement Rukh received 2,494,381 votes (9.4%) and 32 seats. The Rukh list brought to parliament leader of the Crimean Tatar Medjlis Mustafa Dzhemilev. His election, as well as the victory of Refat Chubarov, deputy speaker of the Crimean parliament and Dzhemilev's deputy in the Medjlis in a Crimea-based constituency creates a real possibility for adequate representation of Crimean Tatars' interests in Kyiv, though Chubarov's political perspectives are likely to make him vote differently from Dzhemilev. The election of leader of the Young Rukh Vyacheslav Kyrylenko suggests that the young generation of Rukh finally got access to policy-making. Other MPs elected on the Rukh list include former American citizen Roman Zvarych, Eduard Krech, president of the Soda Plant joint stock society and the object of a number of critical publications in the national media, and Rukh veterans Ivan Drach and Dmytro Pavlychko.

The Socialist-Peasant election bloc "For Truth, for the People, for Ukraine" obtained 2,267,675 votes (8.64%) and 29 seats. The list of new MPs of this group includes Oleksiy Kostusev, former adviser to former prime minister Yevhen Marchuk and Eduard Gurvits's competitor at the 1994 election as the mayor of Odesa. Among the bloc's representatives who won in constituencies, there are Speaker of the 13th parliament Oleksandr Moroz and Deputy Speaker Oleksandr Tkachenko.

The Green party received the remarkable support of 1,448,608 votes (5.46%) and 19 seats. The party list opened the way to the parliament to people who have little to do with environmental protection: commercial director of the telecommunications operator Ukrtelecom Oleg Shevchuk, head of the information and analysis department of the Real-Group Vasyl Khmelnytsky, chairman of the board of the Ukrinbank Serhiy Kryvosheya, assistant to the presidential chief of staff Victor Tkachuk, cochairman of the Ukrainian Council of oil processors, exporters and importers of oil products Igor Kiriushyn, commercial director of the Prioritet advertising agency Iryna Shevchenko and Oleg Polishchuk, first deputy chairman of the board of Kirovohrad-based oil refinery Kirovohradnaftoproduct.

The People's Democratic party, also referred to as the "party of power", collected 1,325,931 votes (4.99%) and 17 seats in the new parliament to be occupied, among other PDP members, by veteran of the Ukrainian democracy Volodymyr Filenko. Several more PDP members, including chairman of the Ukrainian League of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs Anatoly Kinakh, leader of the PDP Anatoly Matvienko and one of the authors of the constitution Mykhailo Syrota, won seats in majoritarian constituencies.

The All-Ukrainian Association Hromada, led by ex-prime minister Pavlo Lazarenko, got 1,242,215 votes (4.68%) and 17 seats. The individuals included in Hromada's party list include editor-in-chief of the parliamentary daily Holos Ukrainy, Serhiy Pravdenko, who seems to have remembered his Dnipropetrovsk origin, and a number of nonpolitical personalities like chief producer of the National Opera Mykola Hnatiuk, vice president of the National Academy of Sciences Petro Tolochko and renowned football player Oleg Blokhin. Winners in majoritarian constituencies include Oleksandr Yeliashkevych, Yulia Tymoshenko, Pavlo Lazarenko, Ivan Kyrylenko.

The Progressive Socialist party did unexpectedly well and obtained 1,071,611 votes (4.04%) and 17 seats, in addition to two seats won by leaders of Progressive Socialists Natalia Vitrenko and Volodymyr Marchenko in majoritarian constituencies.

The Social Democratic party (united) will have a 17-strong faction in the new parliament. In addition to Leonid Kravchuk, Yevhen Marchuk and Vasyl Onopenko, the party will be represented by president of the Ukrainian Association for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Business World", Igor Pluzhnykov, director general of the Independent TV corporation "Inter" Oleksandr Zinchenko, deputy head of the presidential administration, head of the Home Policy Department Vasyl Kremin, chairman of the board of the Slavutych industrial-financial concern Bohdan Hubsy, president of the Blitz-Inform publishing house Serhiy Melnychuk, head of the Starokyivsky borough council and the local state administration Borys Andresiuk and president of the Itera-Ukraine energy trader Anatoly Volkovsky. Numbers 4 and 5 of the Social Democrats' election list, Victor Medvedchuk and Hryhory Surkis won their seats in majoritarian constituencies.

A number of well-known businessmen and public activists were elected in majoritarian constituencies in Kyiv and other regions: Oleksandr Slobodyan, director general of one of Ukraine's most successful companies, governor of the Pravex-bank Mykola Chernovetsky, ex-minister of Justice, now president of the Ukrainian Legal Foundation Serhiy Holovaty, a member of the Forward, Ukraine! election bloc which failed to overcome the 4% barrier. Two other leaders of the Forward, Ukraine! include Victor Shyshkin, who won in Odesa, and Hryhory Omelchenko who will represent his voters from the Poltava region.

In Sevastopol, voters supported Serhiy Kondratevsky, director general of the Financial Industrial House of the Kondratevskis who had been detained under the accusation of criminal actions. Other known winners in the Crimea include Anatoly Rakhansky, ex- deputy chairman of the Presidential Commission for relations with international financial institutions and control over foreign economic activity in 1993, President Kuchma's son-in-law Igor Franchuk and his father, Crimean prime minister Anatoly Franchuk. Agrarians will be represented by leader of the party Kateryna Vashchuk, elected in the Volyn region, director general of the Dnipropetrovsk-based Naukova agrarian firm Mykola Agafonov, wife of the head of the Kyiv regional state administration, head of the Svitanok agrarian firm Tetiana Zasukha, chairman of the Lviv regional council Orest Furdychko, first deputy chairman of the Mykolaiv city state administration Oleksiy Harkusha.

Among the election winners in Dnipropetrovsk, new member of parliament Victor Pinchuk, president of the Intertype research, production and investment group, has good chances to become an influential parliamentary leader.

The failure of the election bloc of the Liberal party and the Party of Labor (the bloc received only about 503,000 votes or 1.9%) means that interests of the Donetsk political elite will not be adequately represented in the Verkhovna Rada. In its turn, the fact may result in a certain increase in separatist sentiments in the region, especially if MPs elected in majoritarian constituencies - leader of the Liberals Volodymyr Shcherban, governor of the First Ukrainian International Bank Igor Yushko, former acting prime minister Yukhym Zviatkovskiy, mayor of Donetsk Volodymyr Rybak, president of the Coral-Bank Oleksandr Rzhavsky and president of the Concern Stirol Mykola Yankovsky - are recognized as representatives of the Donetsk political elite and will be able to represent the region's interests in the new parliament. However, expectations that they, together with other businessmen-turned-politicians may form a powerful pro-market business-minded lobby might not come true: those who have made their fortunes and succeeded in the time of economic turmoil may be reluctant to develop "just" rules of the game.

One of the Zhytomyr-based constituencies brought to parliament Yuri Yekhanurov, ex-chairman of the State Property Fund and a person viewed by many as an advocate of market reforms. Another well-known winner in the region is leader and the only MP of the Christian Democratic party Vitaly Zhuravsky. The victory is the result of many years of Zhuravsky's political efforts. Voters of a constituency in the Transcarpathian region elected Victor Zherdetsky, chairman of the board of shareholders of the Hradobank, who had been under a long-lasting investigation and was accused by the media for misuse of the funds transferred to Ukraine by Germany as compensation to former "ostarbeiters". Voters of the Ivano-Frankivsk region gave seats in the new parliament to acting Attorney General Oleg Lytvak and leader of the National Front Slava Stetsko, the only representative of this radical right bloc.

Among influential politicians and businessmen, elected in the Kyiv region, there are first deputy chairman of the State Committee for Oil, Gas and Oil processing Industry Igor Bakay and adviser to President Kuchma Dmytro Tabachnyk. Another influential personality, head of the administrative council of the STB TV channel of the International Media Center Volodymyr Sivkovych was defeated by Socialist leader Oleksandr Moroz.

In the Kirovohrad region, winners include president of the United Energy Systems of Ukraine Yulia Tymoshenko, director general of the Artemida production company Hanna Antonieva, chairman of the board of the Ukgazbut gas trader Oleg Kukharchuk. Among the well-known losers is adviser to the Ukrainian president Igor Sharov.

Voters in the Lviv region supported Rukh member Mykhailo Kosiv against Stepan Khmara and elected two ultra-radicals: head of the Lviv regional Committee of Youth Organizations Yuri Kryvoruchko and activist of the Social-National party of Ukraine Oleg Tyahnybok. Zoreslava Romovska, who lost 1994 elections to UNA activist Yaroslav Ilyasevych, will represent the party of Reforms and Order together with Victor Pynzenyk, elected in Lviv, and Serhiy Teriokhin, elected in Kyiv. Voters of the Sumy region elected Minister of Transportation Valery Cherep for his fourth term in the parliament. Other winners include first assistant to prime minister of Ukraine Andriy Derkach. Ex-Minister of Defence Valery Shmarov, now president of the Association of state-owned enterprises Ukraviaprom, was elected in Kharkiv. A little sensation occurred in the Cherkasy region: president of the Ukrainian Inter-bank Stock Exchange and winner of the "MP of the Year - 1996" title Vadym Hetman was defeated by Mykhailo Onofriychuk, former leader of the Young Communist League, now first deputy to the Minister of Information. Voters in a constituency of the Chernivtsi region elected first deputy head of the State Taxation Administration Victor Korol. Another local sensation was the victory of former member of staff of the Economic Department of the Presidential Administration, now director of the State Investment and Credit Company Mykola Rudkovsky over ex-prime minister Vitaly Masol. Other significant victories were achieved by governor of the Aval Postal and Pension Bank Fedir Shpyg and deputy Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers Oleg Petrov, an official in charge of the Cabinet's relations with NGOs.

The New Parliament and Ukraine's Foreign Policy: prospects for the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly

Analysis of the composition of the new parliament suggests that the issue of joining the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly (IPA), which was put down with a lot of efforts of right-wingers and some centrists, may be back on the agenda. The 183 left-wing MPs in the new Verkhovna Rada are most likely to vote in favor of joining the IPA. President Kuchma's attitude to the issue in the context of the obviously warming up relations with Russia, the signing of the Agreement on Economic Cooperation and, particularly, Boris Yeltsin's promise to support Leonid Kuchma's re-election bid may bring us back to the former positive perspectives on the IPA, typical for the period prior to the denunciation of the Bela Vezha agreements by the Russian Duma. Therefore, it is likely that MPs - members or supporters of the pro-presidential People's Democratic Party - may support the idea of joining the IPA, adding about 30 votes to the left-wingers'. Another groups of support are likely to include 10 pro-presidential Agrarians and 3 members of the Soyuz party, thus, bringing the total up to the needed constitutional majority of 226 votes. The decision to join the IPA may be adopted provided the due attendance of the sessions and strict party discipline (usually observed by left-wingers). Right-wingers and most of the centrists - Rukh, the Republicans, the Party of Reforms and Order, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Green party, the Social Democrats and even Hromada, notwithstanding the latter's declared agreement to side with Communists and the Greens' possible switches according to particular developments, are most likely to vote against joining the IPA, producing the total of 110 votes. The main pressure will be exerted on 114 non-partisan MPs elected in majoritarian constituencies, who will become a matter of rivalry of the parliamentary antagonists. Meanwhile, according to observers, only 55 of the nonpartisan MPs have not demonstrated a clear political orientation, while others may be divided into backers or "dependents" of the executive branch, its opponents, and MPs who owe their election to support of a particular political party. The only obstacle to the predictable distribution of forces on the issue of joining the IPA may be the position of the President of Ukraine, in case he decides not to give the trump card of "strengthening ties within the CIS" to the parliament he may be unable to control. The lack of the president's support for the idea of the Verkhovna Rada's participation in the IPA will result in its rejection by the PDP MPs and Agrarians which, probably, will take the whole issue off the agenda again.