

A LeftEast platform editorial statement - A Time to Mourn, a Time to Act : an Open Letter to the Ukrainian Left

lundi 17 mars 2014, par [LeftEast](#) (Date de rédaction antérieure : 22 février 2014).

Dear Comrades,

We write to express our solidarity with you in these trying times. Your country is burying a hundred or so dead, demonstrators and policemen, and hundreds more wounded are still in its hospitals. The specter of a civil war has not yet left Ukraine. While not the defeated party, most of you cannot partake in the joys of the victors. Euromaidan was hardly the ideal terrain for your struggle. Its contradictions divided you and those who did participate, were outsized by the Right Sector. We don't say this in reproach : with a few exceptions such as the former Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey, the East European left is everywhere small, and everywhere divided over those strange but powerful social movement that have swept our countries in recent years, expressing the just social anger in ways that have often puzzled us [\[1\]](#). We've been reading your painfully honest self-reflections on the Ukrainian left in the era of the Euromaidan [\[2\]](#). We admire your honesty and share your frustration.

But now Ukraine is moving to the next, post-revolutionary stage in its history. Though more backroom deals still need to be signed, the Maidan evacuated, regions pacified, and elections held, a transition of power has already begun in your country. We write this in full confidence that better days lie ahead for you.

For history repeats itself—even Ukrainian history with its inimitable dramatic flair. The military confrontation that just took place on the Independence Square and its vicinity repeats in infinitely more violent and bloody form the Orange Revolution, which first expelled Yanukovich from power almost a decade ago. And the lessons of that previous power handover—that Yushchenko/Timoshchenko were hardly better than Kuchma/ Yanukovich, that “patriotic,” “real Ukrainian” oligarchs stole no less than do the current paymasters of the Party of Regions, that office-holders are much easier to replace than the structural underpinnings of peripheral capitalism—were not lost on most Ukrainians. It was no accident that Ukraine's left flourished in the years after 2004.

Today's Second Orange Revolution—the popular mobilization that spectacularly replaces one set political elite with another without challenging the country's fundamental dependencies—has just succeeded ; now it's time for it to disappoint and fail, to be betrayed, as its front soldiers and sincere supporters will undoubtedly feel. Looking at the kind of politicians it is recycling back to the main stage, it cannot do otherwise ; they cannot but be corrupt, they cannot but practice the austerity policies their creditors recommend ; they help surrounding themselves with their cronies or handing over ever larger pieces of Ukraine's economy to local oligarchs, to Western or Russian capital. Just give them time and they'll discredit themselves. They will of course blame their initial failures on the failures of their predecessors (and will be partly right), but how long can this last ? How long can it be before the glaring similarities between the opposition and the authorities, who periodically trade chairs, become self-evident ? How long can it be before Svoboda's mock-socialism of the far right becomes exposed for what it is—a sham ? These post-revolutionary conditions are now ripe for you

to form a third pole, distinct from today's Tweedledums and Tweedledees, whose basic similarity will grow more evident by the day.

Your victory, of course, is anything but guaranteed. Today's heroes from the Right Sector and Tiahnibok's falcons may try to put into practice their favorite chants "Death to the enemies !" or "Communists on the gallows !" ; they will soon be changing their paramilitary fatigues for police uniforms [3]. Take care of yourselves ! There will be terrific culture wars, too, as the new masters try to solidify their power : Lenin's monuments are already falling [4] and Bandera's will soon rise ; new laws await the Russian language. Yet you understand better than anyone else the workings of those mechanisms for getting people to vote against their social and economic interests. Whether you like to think of it this way or not, you are the true Ukrainian patriots now. You are the main force that can cut through the false choices of Europe or Russia, West or East, with which the power-hungry political class is ripping your country apart.

From the pages of LeftEast, we've tried to follow your debates on whether the Ukrainian Left missed the opportunity to form a Left Sector of the Euromaidan [5] or whether you were right to stay out of a movement compromised by a strong far-right presence and bound to be co-opted by discredited politicians [6]. We still don't know whether you missed your turn to act or not, but the last few days have rendered those debates moot.

What we know for sure is that now is your time. You are the only ones who can give meaning to the deaths and wounds of the Euromaidan. Godspeed in this fight !

In solidarity,

LeftEast editorial collective

February 22, 2014

P.-S.

* 22 February 2014 :

<http://www.criticatac.ro/lefteast/a-time-to-mourn-a-time-to-act-an-open-letter-to-the-ukrainian-left/>

Notes

[1] See on ESSF (article 30900), [Ukraine : Days of Decisions, Days of Struggle](#).

[2] <http://liva.com.ua/moi-obkusani-likti.html>

[3] <http://lenta.ru/news/2014/02/22/mvd/>

[4] <http://www.aif.ua/society/social/1110821>

[5] See on ESSF (article 30895), [Manifesto : 10 Theses of the Leftist Opposition in Ukraine](#).

[6] See on ESSF (article 30899), [Support Ukrainians but do not legitimize the far-right and](#)

[discredited politicians !.](#)