

Rezension: Askold Krusheknycky: An Orange Revolution: A Personal Journey through Ukrainian History

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reader further useful insights. If I have to find fault with this fine book, it would be that it focuses heavily on Uzbekistan to the relative marginalization of other Central Asian states – Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in particular, are hardly covered, with the text on Turkmenistan somewhat dated by the death in late 2006 of President Niyazov. However this is a minor quibble – given the length and target audience of the book choices had to be made and the heavy focus on Uzbekistan is appropriate given the importance of the state and events there to the region. I would recommend the book to anyone interested in understanding the role that Islam plays in contemporary Central Asia and the reasons why its role is so different from other regions of the world with Muslim majorities. It offers a timely response to essentialist accounts of civilizational clash and/or geopolitical analyses based on crude zero sum calculations that ignore the distinctiveness of the Central Asian experience.

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Askold Krushelnycky, An Orange Revolution. A Personal Journey through Ukrainian History, London 2006 (Harvill Secker), 360 S.

Revolutions always present opportunities for retrospection, analyses, predictions, and speculations. Their attraction for social scientists and politicians increases when the revolutions are contemporary events as is the case with the colored revolutions. The recent avalanche of attempts to effect regime change in a few post-Soviet states was triggered by electoral fraud by which those in government tried to stay in power. Due to the large number of people involved, the scale of developments and the dramatic outcome,

the Ukrainian revolution represents a case study worthy of detailed analysis. This is the goal of Askold Krushelnycky's journalistic book written in the aftermath of the 2004 events and based on solid documentation and subjective perceptions, due in large part to his Ukrainian origins.

The author's connections with Ukraine and his position as a journalist with well-known newspapers has allowed him to reconstruct in a few hundred pages the recent history of the former USSR's second largest country. In a manner close to historical institutionalism, Krushelnycky describes the territorial development of the state, the political leadership and transition period up to the Orange revolution. Special emphasis is placed upon the relationship between Ukraine and Russia and the obedience to the latter of Kravchuk and Kuchma, the two men who served as Ukrainian President from 1992 until 2004. Histori-

cal decisions, institutional reforms, assassination attempts (both successful and unsuccessful) and political games in independent Ukraine are given special attention in chapters with colorful titles: “The Longest Fight”, “Rotten Guys” or “Beheaded”. By juxtaposing facts and hypotheses, the author challenges testimonies often taken for granted such as Melnychenko’s recordings of Kuchma’s orders to kill Gongadze. Detailed descriptions of campaign activities and dirty tricks before and during the October-November elections as well as a comprehensive presentation from a personal perspective of the *Maidan* events complete a well-written book. When scrutinizing the Orange revolution, the author addresses its causes, developments (speeches, actions, negotiations, and behavioral patterns) and short term effects (the opposition’s electoral victory, the failure of the Yushchenko-Tymoshenko partnership in governing together, and the political compromise with Yanukovych).

Despite its pronounced descriptive style and lack of academic elements, this book displays a variety of merits, providing bases for further research. First of all, it is a good and elaborate historical study. With a declared goal of providing an exhaustive picture of what Ukraine was like before the Orange revolution, Krusheknycky sets out facts chronologically, oftentimes combining general aspects, familiar to most of readers with particular biographies and unique statistics. Unfortunately, the lack of sources does not facilitate verifying the accuracy of information. Moreover, the lack of deductive or inductive arguments weakens the message leaving too much room for interpretation.

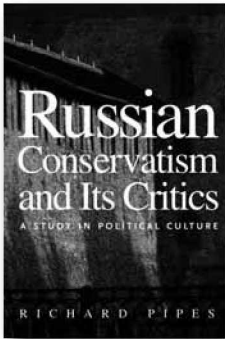
The book provides valuable information to conduct multiple researches by using Ukraine as a single case study. The detailed description of historical upheavals, the confident and comprehensive review of political actors’ biographies combined with a good knowledge of the main constituencies loyal to the candidates in the 2004 elections provide the basis for a study that can illuminate electoral behavior depending on context and launch hypotheses regarding Ukraine’s evolutionary democratization as a result of domestic and international pressure. Furthermore, the Orange revolution can represent a valuable example of how theories of revolution apply to the Ukrainian case. Thus, it can reflect differences between the nature of the 1989 revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe and the Orange manifestation in 2004.

Staying in the field of regime change and institutional reform, the book facilitates further research in the realm of comparative studies. Based on the “most similar” system, a comparison between the colored revolutions is feasible in order to identify trends; the main condition is having comparable data relevant to those states involved in the color revolution phenomena.

From a social science perspective, the book lacks conceptualization, a theoretical framework, hypotheses and references. Moreover, the chosen events, interviews and tangible results are not necessarily representative. The book displays the relevance of a single color revolution in the broader context of revolutionary movements in post-Soviet states, followed by a rather weak and descrip-

tive historical method. However, the book is valuable due to the wealth of raw information, vivid description and the potential it offers for further research. Its biggest merit, summing up, is that it raises questions and opens the floor for further enquiries and answers. This personal stance on recent Ukrainian history helps the reader to understand the forces and mechanisms that drove a successful revolution in the post-Communist world.

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Richard Pipes, Russian Conservatism and Its Critics. A Study in Political Culture, New Haven, Conn. 2006 (Yale University Press), 240 S.

In 1991 when the Soviet Union disintegrated, expectations were high in the West that Russia would take a solid pro-Western path democratizing its political system and giving its people their civil and political rights. Since then it has become clear that such expectations were rather naïve and that neither Russian people nor the current leadership are interested in democratic governance or civil rights. Why do Russians not share democratic and liberal values? Is it solely a legacy of Soviet political culture and upbringing or are there deeper cultural and intellectual reasons for it? For Richard Pipes, professor of Russian history at Harvard, the latter is the case.

In his concise and timely volume “Russian Conservatism and Its Critics: A Study in Political Culture” Pipes masterly traces Russian conservative political thought from the rise of medieval Muscovy in the fifteenth century to the First World War. In the Western context being conservative usually implies favoring less government but Pipes calls conservative those Russian thinkers and statesman that justified and supported an autocratic form of government. Their critics are liberal intellectuals in opposition to the status quo. As the author notes in the introduction, the study of Russian political thought traditionally concentrates on the radicals Bakunin, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Herzen, Lenin, Trotsky, and Plekhanov, but overlooks conservatives and liberals. It is the discourse of often overlooked conservatives, liberals and Slavophiles, in and out of government, that Richard Pipes thoroughly examines.

Unlike Western Europe Russia inherited Byzantine, East Roman rather than Roman culture which meant that it did not benefit from Roman law and Catholic theology. Roman law as inherited by the West had emphasized the importance of private property. The sanctity of private property became a maxim of European political thought with even Jean Bodin, the theorist of royal absolutism, denying