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GLEICHSCHALTUNG

**AUTHORITARIAN
CONSOLIDATION
IN UKRAINE
2010–2012**

K.I.S.
2012

Over the past two years, Mykola Riabchuk has commented regularly on political developments in Ukraine in international periodicals. His best essays, collected within this book, provide a revealing chronicle of the creeping authoritarian consolidation under the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich. An astute analysis of political processes combined with a sound essayistic narrative make the book essential reading for political scientists, students, and all those interested in the region.

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Книжка є своєрідною хронікою політичних подій в Україні за останні два роки, окреслених автором як «авторитарна консолідація». В її основі – аналітичні статті, опубліковані Миколою Рябчуком в англomовних виданнях. Поєднання аналітичної проникливості з майстерним публіцистичним стилем робить книжку цікавою як для фахівців, так і для ширшої публіки, зацікавленої політичними процесами в регіоні.

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Acknowledgements

Throughout the past twenty years, I have been contributing op-ed articles to various periodicals, considering this Kulturträger job as important as academic writing and lecturing and other related activities. It was David Marples, however, who persuaded me to do this on a regular basis, contributing my monthly comments to the blog *Current Politics in Ukraine* that he edits through the Stasiuk Program for the Study of Contemporary Ukraine at the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. I was free to cover any topic I wished, from any angle, and even generously allowed to overstep the regular length for op-ed articles of 1,000 words.

The second person that deserves credit for the collection of articles presented here is my publisher Yuri Marchenko who has always supported all my publishing projects and often initiated them himself. The book that emerged is, in a way, a sequel to the previous one that he published back in 2009 under the title *Mrs. Simpson's Favorite Gun. The Chronicles of the Orange Defeat*. Those “chronicles,” however, had not been coherent enough, even though they reflected, as the subtitle suggested, both the general tendency of the orange dysfunctional governance and its anticipated end.

The new “chronicles” – of the authoritarian consolidation – remain open-ended since I feel it is just too early to predict the time and the way in which Yanukovych’s kleptocratic regime might fall. The new “chronicles” cover the 2010-

2012 developments in Ukraine more systematically, with due theoretical digressions and references to suitable explanatory models. At this point, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the American National Endowment for Democracy and Uppsala Centre of Russian and Eurasian Studies for the grants they provided in the past two years, and the excellent opportunity for both research and writing that I enjoyed in Uppsala and Washington, DC.

The “chronicles” are, in a way, a by-product of my scholarly research that has been focused primarily on attempts to conceptualize the postcommunist transitions in Eastern Europe and place the Ukrainian case within that framework. There were quite a few sources that influenced my understanding and interpretation of political processes in Ukraine. For obvious reasons, I could not refer to all of them properly in editorials. A couple of the most inspiring texts, however, should be mentioned.

First of all, there was the classic book by Robert Putnam “Making Democracy Work” (special thanks to Prof. Yaroslav Hrytsak who drew my attention to it). Additionally, there were seminal articles by Keith Darden on the “blackmail state”, Paul D’Anieri on Ukraine’s flawed institutional design, the late Dmitri Furman on post-Soviet “imitative democracies,” and Thomas Carothers and Lucan Way on the various characteristics of “hybrid regimes” to which Ukraine definitely belongs.

I am obliged to many more colleagues and friends who shared with me their books, articles, ideas, opinions and, sometimes, bread and wine and living space. Needless to say, however, no persons or institutions share responsibility for the opinions expressed in this book or the possible mistakes made by the author.

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