



In four years of Poroshenko's presidency, democracy has been destroyed in Ukraine

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FOUR years on since the inauguration of President Petro Poroshenko, bourgeois democracy has been eliminated in Ukraine. The people are completely excluded from power.

Poroshenko's main slogan during his election campaign was to "live in a new way," but for Ukrainians the "new way" has become a real hell.

At the dawn of the restoration of capitalism in the 1990s, the emerging oligarchy did not have the strength to remove all the remnants of the social gains of the Soviet period from the 1996 constitution.

But after the armed coup of 2014 this process has gone ahead.

In the last four years the so-called "Ukrainian order" has been established in the country — a pro-fascist dictatorship imposed by punitive battalions created in the image of the nazi stormtroopers.

The rule of law has been replaced by the rule of force and "freedom of speech" is now available only to those who praise the ruling regime.

Society has deliberately been split along spiritual, cultural, historical and linguistic grounds. And Ukraine under Poroshenko has completely lost economic and political sovereignty.

The country is under strict external control. Policy is controlled by the US State Department and its Kiev embassy. Contrary to all laws, non-residents of Ukraine have been appointed as top public officials — citizens of the United States, Lithuania, Georgia and Poland.

Health Minister Ulana Suprun — formerly a US entrepreneur running a private health firm — and the now out of favour former Georgian president Mikhail Saakashvili, who wound up as governor of Odessa, are just two of the most famous examples.

Their task has been to turn Ukraine into a market for illicit goods and genetically modified products.

As a result, the domestic market of Ukraine is given up for destruction by transnational corporations at a time when domestic industry is breathing its last.

Eighty per cent of the products sold in the country are imports, mostly of low quality. The car industry, the agricultural machinery industry, shipbuilding and chemicals have been destroyed.

Severing economic ties with Russia and blockading the Donbass turned into a loss of almost a quarter of the country's economic potential. Torn-up contracts deprived the arms and aerospace industries of 80 per cent of their income, the flagship aviation concern Antonov has closed, the Yuzhmash rocket and spacecraft manufacturer is on its knees.

Hundreds of large and thousands of medium and small enterprises have gone bankrupt. Unemployment has risen sharply.

In four years Ukraine has become a nation of fugitives. Between seven and 10 million citizens have emigrated, including to Russia.

Poroshenko is keen on talking about "visa-free" travel as one of his achievements, but Ukrainians are not crossing the border to go to Bratislava to drink a cup of fantastic coffee at the weekend or to listen to the opera in Vienna.

Visa-free travel was required to lift the lid on the boiler when the discontent of millions of citizens who do not have the opportunity to find decent work in Ukraine and feed their families, who do not have the opportunity to guarantee themselves and their families security, boils over.

Poroshenko promised that, if elected, he would end the confrontation in the Donbass in "a few hours."

Instead the civil conflict has turned into a fratricidal civil war, while he as the last huckster profits from the blood and lives of ordinary citizens of Ukraine.

Budget expenditure on the army has increased dramatically as social spending has been reduced. In 2014 a military tax was introduced at 1.5 per cent of income, but where the 38 billion hryvnia collected have gone neither MPs nor the government can say.

During Poroshenko's presidency the fortunes of his entourage and Euromaidan accomplices have increased. In Kiev alone, Poroshenko's Roshen corporation had a single store in 2014. Now it has 17.

Don't be misled by officially declared incomes for MPs, ministers, judges, officials. Their capital, obtained through corruption or siphoned off from state assets, is hidden in various offshore companies. Poroshenko himself was spotted in the Panama papers.

Meanwhile the savings and incomes of the people have melted like snow. Four years of rule by pathological thieves and incorrigible liars have seen incomes shrink by three-quarters. Retail turnover in Ukraine in 2013 was \$110 billion. By 2016 it was just \$45bn and now it's \$30bn.

UN data for the current year shows that at least 60 per cent of the population live below the poverty line and, by the end of the current presidential cycle, 75 per cent will be living in Poroshenko's "new way," ie unable to feed themselves.

The devaluation of the hryvnia led to a sharp reduction in real incomes. Today wages and pensions are the lowest in Europe.

Over the past four years, the average monthly salary has shrunk from around \$450 to \$270 and the average pension stands at about \$100. In the same period utility tariffs have grown between five and eight times over and the price of gas has multiplied by 10. In 2018-19 a further rise in gas prices of 60-70 per cent is planned.

Ukraine is among the 10 countries that spend the highest proportion of incomes on food — 38 per cent, according to the US Department of Agriculture, plus 8.1 per cent on alcohol and cigarettes. Falling incomes have led to malnourishment, with citizens unable to afford meat, dairy products or eggs.

“Co-operation” with international financial organisations has been on bondage terms. Deals with the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation have driven us into debt.

Between 2018 and 2022 Ukraine has to repay over \$64bn in debt obligations. In 2018 the state budget sets revenue at \$31.3bn, so in five years, we are paying two entire years’ budgets to foreign creditors.

A study in January by the Cato Institute found Ukraine the 132nd of 159 countries in freedom rankings, having dropped 17 places in a year. It was recognised as the least free country in Europe. And the World Economic Forum says it has among the worst levels of organised crime in the world, with only Bulgaria and Italy worse in Europe.

Ukraine is firmly in first place when it comes to corruption and this despite the fact that no fewer than seven anti-corruption structures have been established.

What they do and who they dance for became clear when the SBU security service delegated supervisory roles in the National Anti-Corruption Bureau to Evgen Karas, leader of the neonazi C14 organisation, listed as terrorist in the United States, alongside representatives of various organisations, some controlled by officials or business, others frankly fake.

Medical reforms conducted by US citizen Ulana Suprun, the minister whom we call Dr Death, have seen Ukraine break out ahead of all Europe with socially dangerous infections such as tuberculosis, hepatitis C and B, HIV/Aids, and measles. We’ve seen three measles outbreaks this year, with over 18,000 people infected including 11,000 children.

The lack of necessary vaccines against measles, poliomyelitis, botulism, and other killer infections doom Ukrainians to death.

Hospitals have closed, especially in rural areas. Large scientific and medical centres such as the Amosov and Strazhesko centres have lost state funding.

State programmes for treating cancer patients have been cut back, and Suprun says explicitly that these are a waste of money since the patients “will die.”

Doctors’ salaries in Ukraine are 10 times lower than in Poland, 45 times lower than in Germany and 100 times lower than in the United States. Zimbabwean doctors earn twice as much as Ukrainian ones.

As a result, Ukraine’s extinction indicator is the first in Europe and second in the world behind Lesotho. Even the nazi occupation did not see such a rate of degeneration, with just 64 births per 100 deaths. The UN forecasts that the population of Ukraine will fall by 17 per cent by 2050, to 36.4 million.

And the fascist nature of the regime is especially evident in the spiritual and cultural spheres. The right of citizens to freely use their native language, to realise their national and cultural preferences in relation to religion or history, has been eroded.

Russophobia, the ousting of the Russian language from all spheres of life, inflaming hatred towards other peoples — this is daily practice in Ukraine.

Today the regime is actively reformatting history. Heroes and fighters against fascism are declared invaders and Hitler's criminals and their accomplices are heroes. That is Ukraine, four years after Maidan.

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