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Ukraine: Borotba cautions on Zelensky, urges people to take streets May 1

written by Borotba Union Council

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On April 21, TV comedian Vladimir Zelensky won a stunning upset in Ukraine's presidential runoff election, a country where the U.S. helped to engineer an ultraright coup five years ago. Zelensky's victory over incumbent president and oligarch Petro Poroshenko was driven by popular disgust

with the rise of the neofascist right, rampant privatization and austerity, and the brutal war against the Donbass republics of Donetsk and Lugansk.



The following analysis of the elections — and what comes next — was issued by Borotba (Struggle), a revolutionary Marxist organization banned in Ukraine since 2014, which continues to organize inside and outside the country. The statement was translated by Struggle-La Lucha's Greg Butterfield.

Political statement of the Borotba Union Council

April 23: The defeat of Poroshenko's regime in the April 21 elections was the logical outcome of a government based on neoliberal reforms and stunning nationalist propaganda. The people of Ukraine expressed their distrust of corrupt officials hiding behind patriotic rhetoric.

President Poroshenko built his campaign on interference in church affairs, trying to establish one state religion, with militaristic rhetoric, as well as with nationalist slogans in matters of language.

The pre-election slogan "Army, language, faith" found support from only 25 percent of voters. It should be noted that the result was the most crushing defeat of an incumbent president in the history of Ukraine. Even this modest result was achieved only by creating a society of fear, in the context of prohibition of left-wing political organizations, control over the media and the use of dirty political tricks.

All this gives the people of Ukraine optimism and confidence in the future.

Unfortunately, despite some improvement in the public atmosphere, Ukraine will have difficult times ahead. President-elect Vladimir Zelensky is only a comedian and actor in the views of ordinary people; but in fact he is a multimillionaire, one of the richest producers and an owner of offshore companies. He is a close friend and business partner of the oligarch Igor Kolomoisky, who is now in disgrace.

Zelensky is a compromise figure among some of the largest Ukrainian bourgeoisie. The oligarchs have long dreamed of a so-called "technical" president, who will have limited powers, against the background of strengthening the role of parliament. The oligarchs, fearing the strengthening of any one among them over the others, want to make the parliamentary republic a kind of "Club for the Elect" which will establish a balance of interests.

There is a danger that, relying on colossal popular support and the expectation of

change, President Zelensky will begin to carry out the most unpopular neoliberal reforms, for example, the sale of agricultural land, privatization of the gas transmission system and the privatization of state enterprises.

In this situation, there are no political forces and parties in the country that can resist the neoliberal course. The Communist Party and Borotba are in fact in a position of illegality.

In an atmosphere of renewal, many expect from President Zelensky the democratization of the political situation in the country, in particular:

- disarming of nationalist gangs and private armies;
- release of all political prisoners;
- de-Nazification of law enforcement agencies and the army;
- legalization of opposition organizations and parties outlawed by the previous leadership of the country.

Time will tell whether the new president will meet the expectations of the millions. However, despite the ban on the Borotba Union, despite intimidation by the special services and the threat of neo-Nazis, we will continue to fight for a free, socialist Ukraine!

We call on all honest people not to be silent!

We call on everyone who wants change to unite in autonomous groups and communicate!

We call on all those who are tired of nationalist propaganda to take to the streets on May 1 under red flags!

