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Peter J. Potichnyj

The Referendum and Presidential Elections in Ukraine

When the electorate in Ukraine went to the polls on December 1, 1991 to express its will about the independence proclaimed on August 24, 1991 by the Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council) and to elect the Republic's first President, many political analysts were not certain what to expect. To be sure, there were many indications that the referendum would affirm the Proclamation of Independence, but doubts remained about the margin of that support mainly because of the large minorities in Ukraine, particularly in the South-East, Bukovyna, and Zakarpattia. When the returns showed that voters had chosen independence by over 90 percent, everyone was quite surprised. Public opinion polls conducted in the republic did not predict such overwhelming results.¹ The

¹ The Association of Sociologists of Ukraine conducted a sample poll that predicted 87% support for independence (Kiev Radio-3 October 15, 1991); Moscow's *Pravda* reported that, in Dnipropetrovs'ke, the expectation was that only 20.6% would support independence, while 79.2% would vote for remaining within the Union (N. Mironov, "Puzzle With Seven Known Quantities," *Pravda* November 18, 1991); An *Izvestiia* correspondent reporting from Zaporizhzhia indicated that, although the opinion poll of the Sociology Institute predicted two-thirds support for independence, doubts remained, especially among the Rukh members and the "Aktyv voli" (a group from Canada agitating for independence), who felt that only a minority would support the referendum (V. Filippov, "Rukh has Doubts, Canadians Agitate," *Izvestiia* November 18, 1991: 2); A poll conducted by the Ukrainian Television and Radio Public Opinion Service in November showed that 84.6% of respondents said they would vote in the national referendum on December 1 (the October figure was 78.4%). Positive attitudes towards the Ukrainian independence act was voiced by 79% of those polled (72.4% in October) and 82.2% named economic self-sufficiency as the mainstay of the Republic's independence (71.1% in October). About 2,000 persons residing in various regions of Ukraine and representing diverse social strata answered the questions of the poll (Moscow Radio in English, November 23, 1991); Kharkiv's sociological center reported that 63% of people in Kharkiv region intend to vote in favour of independence, 22% against, and 15% of respondents were undecided (Moscow Radio in English, November 28, 1991); The Zaporizhzhia Center of Public Opinion reported that some 85% of voters would take part in the referendum, of which 67% would support independence, and 9% would not (Kiev Radio-2, November 14, 1991); Chernihiv was projected to vote 60% for independence (Kiev Radio-3, November 3, 1991); Support for independence would be as follows: Donetsk—65%, Zakarpattia—76%, Kiev—88%, Krym—53%, L'viv—86%, Odesa—83%, Ternopil'—92%, Chernivtsi—76% (Kiev Radio-3, November 3, 1991); Tsentral'ne ukrains'ke

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following table shows the early opinion polls conducted by the Institute of Sociology and contrasts them with the final results.

TABLE 1. REFERENDUM RESULTS

Early Polls (October; November 1991)	Final Results (December 1991)
Kiev city (76.6%; 81.5%)	92.8%
West (L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'ke, Ternopil') (87.8%; 86.4%)	97.3%
North-West (Khmeln'nyts'kyi, Rivne [Rovno], Volyn') (77.9%; 86.4%)	96.1%
South-West (Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia) (76.3%; 75.0%)	92.6%
Center (Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Vinnytsia, Poltava) (74.8%; 72.9%)	95.0%
North (Kiev, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv) (72.1%; 71.8%)	94.7%
South (Kherson, Odesa [Odessa], Mykolaiv) (70.8%; 69.4%)	88.3%
East (Luhans'ke, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs'ke, Zaporizhzhia) (65.8%; 66.6%)	83.0%
North-East (Sumy, Kharkiv) (61.4%; 66.6%)	84.2%
Krym [the Crimea] (53.3%; 50.0%)	54.1%

Source: The first set of figures comes from: Naukovo-doslidnyi tsentr Kongresu dilovykh kil Ukrainy and Analitychno-doslidna sluzhba Respublikans'koho tovarystva "Ukrains'ka birzha," as reported in *Demokratychna Ukraina* November 2, 1991: 2-3; The final results come from "Ukraine's Vote for Freedom," *The Ukrainian Weekly* 49 (1991): 1. These have been readjusted by the author to fit the regional distributions of an earlier poll.

At best, the early polls were indicators of a general trend; they were rather unreliable in predicting the final strength of the vote. Only in the Western region and in Krym (the Crimea) did predictions come within 5 percent of the final results. Elsewhere, the differences ranged from 10 to 23 percent, depending on the region. Such mixed results are not unusual even in the Western world which has a long history (50 years) of election polling. In this connection, it is worth noting that in an earlier poll of its readers, *Literaturna Ukraina* came much closer to estimating popular sentiment on this important question. It reported that 90.4 percent of readers supported an independent Ukraine.²

The struggle for the minds of the populace was intense indeed. Moscow pulled out all the stops in trying to combat Ukrainian secession from the USSR. In the period between August 24 (Declaration of Independence) and December 1

viddilennia Vsesoiuznogo tsentru vyvchennia hromads'koi dumky reported that only 47% of Krym voters would support independence, while Ukraine as a whole would support it by 71% (Kiev Radio-3, November 15, 1991); Donetsk'kyi Mizhhaluzevyi tsentr profesiinnoi pidhotovky psykhologii ta sotsiologii pratsi predicted that 61% of Donetsk'ke voters would be for independence, and 31% against. It also reported that more than 50% were against advocated autonomy for the Donbas region (Kiev Radio-3, November 13, 1991).

² V. Bebyk and V. Polokhalo, "Duma pro Ukrainu," *Literaturna Ukraina* 22, 27-29, 31, 41 (1991).

(The Referendum on Independence), the top Soviet leadership (both liberal and conservative), and many Russian republican leaders mounted a very strong campaign against Ukraine's independence.³ The Central TV, Radio, and print media launched a vicious campaign of misinformation about what Ukrainian authorities intended to do with respect to minorities (especially Russians) and nuclear arms.⁴ The Russian media either minimized or totally ignored the Verkhovna Rada's Declaration of Rights of the Nationalities of Ukraine.⁵ The proclamation of Ukraine as a nuclear-free zone by the Verkhovna Rada and its decision to rid the country of nuclear arms under international supervision were also virtually ignored or misrepresented. The situation became so serious that the Presidium of the Verkhovna Rada was forced to condemn officially this anti-Ukrainian stand of Moscow,⁶ and Leonid Kravchuk threatened to withhold payments from Central TV if it continued its disinformation campaign.⁷

³ As soon as Ukraine declared sovereignty on July 16, 1990, G. Kh. Popov said that the Crimea might separate from Ukraine. After the Proclamation of Independence on August 24, 1991, Mr. Popov said on Central Television that "if Ukrainians insist on this declaration then the review of borders will be necessary and Russia will come to Ukraine for the protection of Russians." Similar sentiments were expressed by P. Voshchanov, the press secretary of Mr. Yeltsin (*Izvestiia* August 29, 1991); G. Burbulis said: "RSFSR cannot become a republic like others . . . Russia can and will become a legal successor to the USSR and all its structures" (*Megapolis-Ekspres* October 17, 1991); "Russia today is not one of the 15 powerless republics of the almighty empire. . . . It is a legal leader of the former empire" (*Novoe Vremia* 36 [1991]); M. Poltoranin, the RSFSR Minister of Information, warned Ukraine that "Anti-Russian attitudes will not be swallowed quietly by the Russian leadership. We should take an example from the U.S.A. Do you remember American reaction when their citizens were insulted in Grenada?" (*Rossia* 38 [1991]); M.S. Gorbachev on several occasions came out very strongly against Ukrainian independence and insisted that Ukrainians would vote against independence. See M. Odinets, "Seven Candidates: Presidential Marthon in Ukraine," *Pravda* November 6, 1991: 21; Iu. M., "Moskovs'kii kumi mezha na umi," *Sil's'ki Visti*, November 28, 1991: 1; V. Butkevych, "Oshibka Prezidenta Gorbacheva," *Pravda Ukrainy* December 12, 1991: 1-2; "Zaiava deputativ," *Sil's'ki Visti* December 12, 1991: 1.

⁴ Tendencious reporting continued after the Referendum. See "Vliianie vcherashnego referendumu na mezhgossudarstvennye otnosheniia v mire: Kommentarii Inform - TsTV," December 3, 1991. On the eve of the referendum, in a Kiev synagogue, two grenades were found that failed to detonate. The purpose of this provocative act was to show that Ukrainians were anti-Semites. See "Zaiavlenie Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Ukrainy," *Furtwaengler* December 3, 1991.

⁵ "Dekliaratsiia prav natsional'nostei Ukrainy," *Sil's'ki Visti* November 5, 1991: 1 and *Literaturna Ukraina* 45 (1991): 1.

⁶ "Zaiava Prezidii Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy," Kiev Radio-2, November 6, 1991.

⁷ Kravchuk said the following: "I do not like false assessments of us addressed to Ukraine and the whole Union on central television. With no access to these channels, we cannot say 'bless you' every time someone sneezes. So when they ask us for money to maintain central television, we demand that Ukraine have a day on central television where we might express our position too." M. Odinets, *Pravda* November

Other measures—such as reducing the supply of paper while at the same time distributing large numbers of leaflets with an anti-Ukrainian content, and calling for the preservation of the USSR in heavily settled Russian areas of Ukraine—were also used. Rumours, predicting that independence might result in border revisions with Russia and, possibly, even a nuclear exchange, were also widely circulated by such newspapers as *Moskovskie Novosti*.⁸ Even the USSR Ministry of Defence entered the fray on the eve of the vote by ordering a “battle-readiness inspection for troops deployed in Ukraine.”⁹ At the last moment, thanks to protests, the inspection was carried out without field manouvers.

Especially troubling was that this activity was not limited to conservative or centrist hard-liners. In their own way, both Mr. A. Sobchak and Mr. G. Popov, the mayors of St. Petersburg and Moscow respectively, greatly contributed to this hostile campaign, while Gorbachev expressed annoyance not only at George Bush for his promise to recognize Ukraine,¹⁰ but stated that the will of the citizens of Ukraine, expressed in the referendum, would not be

6, 1991: 2. On November 19, 1991, Kravchuk warned again that the Central TV and the press media are trying to “ignite hostilities between Ukrainians and Russians” (Radio Kiev in English, November 19, 1991). There were also attempts by the newspaper *Moskovskie Novosti* to entice the editors of the magazine *Zhinka* to supply them with photographs that would show how badly people live in a “Ukraine that wants to separate.” Kravchuk said that he raised such matters both with Gorbachev and the Central TV but to no avail (Kiev Radio-3, November 19, 1991). See also “Vidkrytyi lyst legoru Iakovlevu” from a number of Ukrainian writers calling him to stop this disinformation campaign by the Central TV (*Literaturna Ukraina* 45 [1991]). The Russian Orthodox Church also got into the act of saving the empire. The Orthodox Brotherhoods whose Honorary Chairman is Alexii II, Moscow Patriarch, issued a call to Ukrainians “not to permit the enemy of our salvation to divide us.” Thus, by implication, those who were for independence were doing the work of the devil (A. Budris, “Pravoslavnye bratstva pryzivaiut k iedinstvu Ukrainy i Rossii,” *TASS*, November 22, 1991). A summary of such efforts is presented in Iu. Motornyi, “Repetytsii lystopadovoho shalu,” *Sil's'ki Visti* November 2, 1991: 1. In fairness, one must add that there were numerous calls by Russians living in Ukraine to support Ukraine's independence. Compare, for example, “K russkim, grazhdanam Ukrainy,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 47 (1991): 2. See also “Obrashchenie orgkomiteta dvizheniia ‘Russkie za nezavisimost' Ukrainy’,” *Literaturna Ukraina* October 24, 1991: 1.

⁸ This caused a reaction in Ukraine. See S. Tikhii, “V upor ne slyshim,” *Koza* October 30, 1991: 3; H. Hnativ, “Novyi motyv staroi pisni,” *Za vil'nu Ukrainu* October 19, 1991: 1. A. I. Batula and V. P. Stronin, representatives of “Antratsyt” and “Luhans'kvuhillia” came out strongly against attempts to separate Donbas from Ukraine. “Zaiava predstavnykiv vuhil'nykh regioniv Donbasu,” *Robitnycha Hazeta* November 1, 1991: 2.

⁹ Kiev Radio in Ukrainian, November 19, 1991.

¹⁰ A. Ostalskii, “Soviet-American Tiff Over Ukrainian Referendum,” *Izvestiia* November 30, 1991: 1.

regarded by him as an act of secession from the Union.¹¹ Kravchuk criticized both Gorbachev and Yeltsin for saying that Ukraine could not be an independent state.¹²

The problems were not limited to Moscow. A strong campaign against the referendum was organized in Krym by various Russian groups, including deputies from the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and even some political group from Germany.¹³ The Crimean Tatars, on the other hand, came out strongly for independence and approved participation in the election, instructing their people to vote in the presidential race either for Viacheslav Chornovil or Levko Lukianenko.¹⁴

Romania also expressed territorial pretensions to Ukraine. On November 28, the Romanian Senate declared that it would not recognize the results of the referendum on Ukrainian independence in territories that once belonged to Romania, namely North Bukovyna and South-Bessarabia. This position was supported by Mircea Druk, the leader of the Moldovan Popular Front and the former Moldovan Prime Minister.¹⁵ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine immediately rejected these claims by stating that "these lands have from times immemorial been settled by Ukrainians." In protest, Mr. Zlenko, Minister of Foreign Affairs, cancelled his trip to Bucharest.¹⁶

A proposal to review borders between Ukraine and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, emanating from certain right-wing forces in the CSFR, were also quickly rejected by V. Durdynets', chairman of the Standing Committee for Defence and State Security of the Ukrainian Parliament. In an interview in *Rude*

¹¹ Kiev Radio in English, December 1, 1991.

¹² "Ukraine Votes For Independence, But Gorbachev Does Not Consider This An Act Of Rupture With Union," *Izvestiia* December 2, 1991: 1.

¹³ "Impers'kyi syndrom: Kryms'ki pasazhi moskovs'kykh shovinistiv," *Za vil'nu Ukrainu* October 22, 1991; A. Svidzinskiy, "Ukrainci v Krymu," *Literaturna Ukraina* 45 (1991): 2; T. Steshenkova, "Chym zhe skinchyt'sia protystoiannia," *Literaturna Ukraina* 45 (1991): 3; V. Humeniuk, "Impers'kyi syndrom: Chy ne zakryiet'sia Chumats'kyi shliakh?" *Kul'tura i zhyttia* November 16, 1991. See also a very interesting article that discusses relations between the Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians within the Russian-Ottoman relations. V. Butkevych, "Pravo na Krym. Khto ioho maie: Rosiia, Ukraina?" *Literaturna Ukraina* 47-48 (1991).

¹⁴ Kiev Radio in English, November 27, 1991; Mustafa Dzhemilev put it as follows: "Rukh supports the Tatars and we do not want border changes" (*TASS*, November 27, 1991).

¹⁵ Moscow Radio in English, November 29, 1991. On November 14, 1991, thirteen political parties in Romania came out against the referendum in the "annexed territories" (D. Diakov, *TASS*, November 14, 1991). Also in these territories a "Socialist Association" distributed leaflets in which it called for the preservation of the Soviet Union (Kiev Radio-3, November 7, 1991).

¹⁶ Kiev Radio in English, November 29, 1991.

Pravo during his visit to Prague, he said that the “border questions must be resolved by democratic legal means and not by means of force” and that “the inhabitants of the Zakarpattia region consider themselves citizens of the Ukrainian state.”¹⁷ The need for an Autonomous Zakarpattia was also rejected, and the oblast' leadership which had proposed this scheme had to resign because of large-scale protest by opponents.¹⁸

These developments spurred Ukrainian authorities, Rukh activists, various representatives of national minorities, and even the Ukrainian diaspora to redouble their efforts on behalf of independence. The Ukrainian Radio and TV began a systematic campaign in support of independence. Ukrainian groups from the diaspora brought with them computer technology, small printing presses, and even paper, and began a systematic campaign—especially in eastern regions of Ukraine.¹⁹

It is, of course, very difficult to ascertain how much influence such counter-measures had on the thinking of the population. No doubt, the economic situation in Russia and especially food shortages in larger cities served as a powerful reminder to Ukraine's inhabitants that a separate existence might—at least partially—insulate them from such misery. It should also be stressed that all candidates hammered home the idea that only an independent Ukraine could insure a decent life for its people.²⁰ The anti-independence campaign by Yeltsin

17 “The Zakarpattia Region Is An Indivisible Part of Ukraine,” *Krasnaia Zvezda* November 12, 1991: 3.

18 The faculty members of the Uzhhorod University even asked the Verkhovna Rada to invalidate the earlier oblast' decision to hold a referendum on autonomy (Kiev Radio-3, November 14, 1991). See also V. Il'nyts'kyi, “Final ahonii patroniv avtonomii,” *Za vil'nu Ukrainu* October 23, 1991: 2; O. Myshanych, “Oberezhno—avtonomiia,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 47 (1991): 2.

19 V. Filippov, “Rukh Has Doubts, Canadians Agitate,” *Izvestiia* November 18, 1991: 2; See also “Zvernennia Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy do Narodu,” *Za vil'nu Ukrainu* October 25, 1991: 1; “Zaklyk Vseukrains'koi Kozats'koi Rady,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 45 (1991): 3; “Zvernennia Holovy OUN Slavy Stets'ko,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 45 (1991): 3; The First All-Ukrainian Congress of National Minorities in Odesa came out for Ukraine's independence (Kiev Radio-3, November 17, 1991 and November 19, 1991). An interesting article remembers the past cultural renaissance of various nationalities and promises a new one in the future independent Ukraine. Cf., “Konhres natsii Ukrainy,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 46 (1991): 1, 4; “Pershyi Vseukrains'kyi Mizhnatsional'nyi Konhres,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 47 (1991): 1; “Zvernennia do vsikh natsii i natsional'no-etnichnykh hrup Ukrainy” and “Rezoliutsiia Persho Vseukrains'koho Mizhnatsional'noho Konhresu,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 48 (1991): 3.

20 Radio Rossii in Russian, November 20, 1991; Radio Kiev in English, November 27, 1991.

and Gorbachev on the eve of the referendum—perceived as a gross interference in internal political affairs—also probably helped the pro-independence forces.²¹

REFERENDUM RESULTS

According to the Central Electoral Commission, out of a total of 37,885,555 eligible voters, some 31,891,742 (84.18 percent) took part in the Referendum. Of those, 90.32 percent or 28,804,071 voted for independence; 2,417,554 or 7.58 percent voted against. The District Electoral Commissions declared 670,117 or 2.10 percent of the ballots spoiled. The following tables show the results.

TABLE 2. SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF UKRAINIAN ELECTORATE
In Numbers

<i>Oblast'</i>	<i>Eligible to vote</i>	<i>Number who voted</i>	<i>Voting "yes"</i>	<i>Voting "no"</i>	<i>Spoiled ballots</i>
Vinnysia	1,424,110	1,301,765	1,242,244	39,387	20,134
Volyn'	762,872	710,989	684,834	16,299	20,134
Dnipropetrovs'ke	2,877,974	2,354,169	2,127,089	181,529	104,058
Donets'ke	3,854,440	2,957,372	2,481,157	372,157	104,058
Zhytomyr	1,105,023	1,000,425	950,976	35,798	13,651
Zakarpattia	856,687	710,286	657,678	31,891	20,717
Zaporizhzhia	1,553,858	1,252,225	1,135,271	91,929	25,025
Ivano-Frankivs'ke	1,019,145	975,655	960,281	10,028	5,346
Kiev	1,430,507	1,259,129	1,202,773	36,086	20,270
Kiev City	1,913,378	1,537,278	1,427,715	81,234	28,329
Kirovohrad	924,050	813,833	764,053	35,613	14,167
Luhans'ke	2,085,931	1,682,344	1,410,894	255,589	45,861
L'viv	2,011,267	1,915,597	1,866,921	35,671	13,006
Mykolaiv	971,321	818,538	732,179	66,858	19,501
Odesa [Odessa]	1,882,610	1,412,228	1,205,755	163,831	42,642
Poltava	1,313,588	1,206,801	1,145,639	44,368	16,854
Rivne [Rovno]	814,246	757,151	726,575	19,369	11,207
Sumy	1,072,639	948,278	878,198	46,479	23,601
Ternopil'	861,647	836,667	825,526	6,565	4,576
Kharkiv	2,377,159	1,798,977	1,553,065	187,631	58,281
Kherson	903,891	753,843	679,451	54,248	26,144
Khmel'nyts'kyi	1,133,350	1,059,021	1,019,813	27,743	11,465
Cherkasy	1,154,455	1,040,971	999,603	28,703	12,665
Chernivtsi	668,781	586,377	544,022	24,226	18,129
Chernihiv	1,068,152	969,638	908,904	39,776	20,960
Sevastopil' City	307,024	195,688	111,671	77,891	6,926
Krym [the Crimea]	1,535,154	1,036,190	561,498	437,505	37,187
Total		31,891,435	28,803,785	2,417,544	670,108

Source: Central Elections Commission as reprinted in *Novyi Shliakh*, December 21-28, 1991: 6.

²¹ A. Ostal'skii, "Soviet-American Tiff Over Ukrainian Referendum," *Izvestiia* November 30, 1991: 1.

TABLE 3. SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION OF UKRAINIAN ELECTORATE
In Percentages

<i>Oblast'</i>	<i>Eligible to vote</i>	<i>Percent voting</i>	<i>Percent "yes"</i>	<i>Percent "no"</i>	<i>Percent spoiled</i>
Vinnysia	1,424,110	91.41	95.43	3.03	1.55
Volyn'	762,872	93.20	96.32	2.29	1.39
Dnipropetrovs'ke	2,877,974	81.80	90.36	7.71	1.93
Donets'ke	3,854,440	76.73	83.90	12.58	3.52
Zhytomyr	1,105,023	90.53	95.06	3.58	1.36
Zakarpattia	856,687	82.91	92.59	4.49	2.92
Zaporizhzhia	1,553,858	80.59	90.66	7.34	2.00
Ivano-Frankivs'ke	1,019,145	95.73	98.42	1.03	0.55
Kiev	1,430,507	88.02	95.52	2.87	1.61
Kiev City	1,913,378	60.34	92.87	5.28	1.85
Kirovohrad	924,050	88.07	93.88	4.38	1.74
Luhans'ke	2,085,931	80.65	63.86	13.41	2.73
L'viv	2,011,267	95.24	97.45	1.86	0.68
Mykolaiv	971,321	84.27	89.45	8.17	2.38
Odesa	1,882,610	75.01	85.38	11.60	3.02
Poltava	1,313,588	91.87	94.93	3.67	1.40
Rivne	814,246	92.99	96.76	2.56	1.43
Sumy	1,072,639	88.41	92.81	4.90	2.49
Ternopil'	861,647	97.10	98.67	0.78	0.55
Kharkiv	2,377,159	75.68	86.33	10.43	3.24
Kherson	903,891	83.40	90.13	7.20	2.67
Khmel'nyts'kyi	1,133,350	93.44	96.30	2.62	1.08
Cherkasy	1,154,455	90.17	96.03	2.76	1.22
Chernivtsi	668,781	87.68	92.78	4.13	3.09
Chernihiv	1,068,152	90.78	93.74	4.10	2.16
Sevastopol' City	307,024	63.74	57.07	39.39	3.54
Krym	1,535,154	67.50	54.19	42.22	3.59
Total		84.15	90.32	7.58	2.10
Black Sea Fleet			75.00		

Source: Central Election Commission as reprinted in *Novyi Shliakh*, December 21-28, 1991: 6.

The following table, in addition to voting results, gives an ethnic breakdown for various oblasts.

TABLE 4. HOW UKRAINE VOTED IN THE REFERENDUM

Categories: I=Total population II=Percent Ukrainians III=Percent Russians IV=Percent Others V=Percent "yes" vote VI=Percent "no" vote.

Oblast'	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Vinnysia	1,820,783	91.6	5.9	2.5	95.43	3.03
Volyn'	1,058,438	94.6	4.4	1.0	96.32	2.29
Dnipropetrovs'ke	3,869,858	71.6	24.2	4.2	90.36	7.71
Donets'ke	5,311,781	50.7	43.6	5.7	83.90	12.58
Zhytomyr	1,537,604	84.9	7.9	7.2	95.06	3.58
Zakarpattia	1,245,618	78.4	4.0	17.6	92.59	4.49
Zaporizhzhia	2,074,018	63.1	32.0	4.9	90.66	7.34
Ivano-Frankivs'ke	1,413,211	95.0	4.0	1.0	98.42	1.03
Kiev City	2,572,212	72.5	20.9	1.9	92.88	5.28
Kiev	1,834,369	89.4	8.7	1.9	95.52	2.87
Kirovohrad	1,228,093	85.3	12.0	3.0	93.88	4.38
Krym	2,430,495	28.5	67.0	4.5	54.19	42.22
Luhans'ke	2,857,031	51.9	44.8	3.3	83.86	13.41
L'viv City					97.50	
L'viv	2,727,410	90.4	7.1	2.5	97.46	1.86
Mykolaiv	1,328,306	75.6	19.4	5.0	89.45	8.17
Odesa	2,624,245	54.6	27.4	18.0	85.38	11.60
Poltava	1,748,716	87.8	10.2	2.0	94.93	3.67
Rivne	1,164,241	93.3	4.6	2.1	95.96	2.56
Sevastopil' City					57.07	39.39
Sumy	1,417,498	85.5	13.3	1.2	92.61	4.90
Ternopil'	1,163,974	96.8	2.3	0.9	98.67	0.78
Kharkiv	3,174,675	62.8	33.2	4.0	86.33	10.43
Kherson	1,236,970	75.8	20.2	4.0	90.13	7.20
Khmel'nyts'kyi	1,521,564	90.4	5.8	3.8	96.30	2.62
Cherkasy	1,527,353	90.5	8.0	1.5	96.03	2.76
Chernivtsi	940,801	70.8	6.8	22.5	92.78	4.13
Chernihiv	1,412,770	91.4	6.8	1.8	93.74	4.10

Source: 1. Central Electoral Commission, Tuesday, December 3, 1991. Reprinted in *The Ukrainian Weekly* December 8, 1991: 1; 2. Vitalii Boiko, Central Electoral Commission, Tuesday, December 3, 1991, reprinted in *Svoboda* 98.232: 1; *Ukrains'ki Visti*, December 8, 1991: 3; *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniia*, Chast' II, Informizdatstenter, 1989; "O natsional'nom sostave naseleniia Ukrainskoi SSR," mimeo, 14.VI. 1990.

These results are significant because they, among other things, undermine claims of various foreign interests to parts of the Ukrainian territory. Three areas in particular stand out in terms of their national composition: the South-Eastern and Southern regions, including Krym, where the percentage of Russians in the population is quite high; the South-Western region, Chernivtsi, where the Romanians continue to express territorial claims; and the Zakarpattia, a much less serious situation, where some elements of the local population (the

Rusyns), supported by certain forces in CSFR,²² have expressed a desire to join the neighbouring Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. With the exception of the Romanian problem, the referendum vote has put an end to such claims, at least for the time being.²³

More importantly, the referendum results—attained in an open and democratic manner, and expressing the will of the entire population of Ukraine, not merely its fringe elements—led Russian and world leaders to realize that the old structures of the Soviet system were no longer viable, that they cannot be maintained, and that a new era in the relations among the former constituent parts of the USSR was at hand. The meetings at Minsk, which created the Commonwealth of Independent States, and at Alma Ata, which brought into the fold an additional eight entities, marked an end to the 74-year old totalitarian system, and with it, the *de facto* and *de jure* recognition of the individual members by the international community.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

No less interesting was the presidential vote. Although there was little doubt that Leonid Kravchuk held the lead, the number of people who voted for him in all regions of the country was substantial. The following table gives the final vote for each candidate in absolute figures.

TABLE 5. RESULTS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>Vote for</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Vote against</i>	<i>%</i>
Hryniov, V.B.	1,329,758	4.17	29,791,360	93.41
Kravchuk, L.M.	19,643,481	61.59	11,477,637	35.99
Lukianenko, L.H.	1,432,556	4.49	29,688,562	93.09
Taburians'kyi, L.	182,713	0.57	30,938,405	97.01
Chornovil, V.M.	7,420,727	23.27	23,700,391	74.31
Iukhnovs'kyi, I.R.	554,719	1.74	30,566,399	95.84

Source: Ukrinform as reprinted in *Ukrains'ki Visti* 47 (1991): 3.

The regional distribution of the vote in percentages can be seen in Table 6.

²² The Czechoslovak Republican Party requested the International Court of Justice in The Hague to review the incorporation of Zakarpattia into Ukraine. O. Myshanych, "Oberezhno—avtonomiia," *Literaturna Ukraina* 47 (1991): 2.

²³ It should be pointed out, however, that in areas inhabited by large minorities, the percentage of spoiled ballots was quite high. Thus in Krym, Donets'ke, Odesa, Kharkiv, Chernivtsi and the city of Sevastopil' respectively, the spoilage was over 3 percent, while in Zakarpattia, Zaporizhzhia, Luhans'ke, Mykolaiv, Sumy, Kherson and Chernihiv it was over 2 percent of the cast ballots.

TABLE 6. RESULTS IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Categories: TT=Total Turnout (%) H=Hryniiov K=Kravchuk L=Lukianenko
T=Taburians'kyi Ch=Chornovil Iu=Iukhnovs'kyi

Oblast'	TT	H	K	L	T	Ch	Iu
Vinnysia	91.41	1.39	72.34	3.26	0.36	18.21	1.62
Volin'	93.19	0.83	51.65	8.90	0.34	31.39	3.25
Dnipropetrovs'ke	81.82	3.24	69.74	2.47	1.85	18.15	1.25
Donets'ke	76.64	10.96	71.47	3.11	0.71	9.59	0.93
Zhytomyr	90.53	1.12	77.59	3.30	0.35	13.97	1.08
Zakarpattia	82.92	1.32	58.03	4.98	0.39	27.58	2.83
Zaporizhzhia	80.67	3.87	74.73	3.07	0.65	12.98	1.32
Ivano-Frankivs'ke	95.72	0.56	13.70	11.81	0.14	67.10	3.32
Kiev City	80.29	3.54	56.13	6.36	0.54	26.71	3.53
Kiev	88.02	1.68	65.99	5.62	0.48	21.23	1.51
Kirovohrad	88.05	1.66	74.77	3.54	0.55	15.55	1.06
Krym	67.53	9.43	56.63	1.93	0.86	8.03	0.90
Luhans'ke	80.68	6.75	76.23	2.01	0.52	9.94	0.74
L'viv	96.28	0.83	11.50	4.70	0.18	75.86	4.43
Mykolaiv	84.11	5.63	72.33	2.26	0.39	15.06	0.69
Odesa	75.11	8.38	70.69	2.77	0.52	12.83	1.13
Poltava	91.86	2.46	75.05	4.21	0.61	13.63	1.26
Rivne	92.94	0.80	53.07	13.38	0.43	25.65	3.57
Sevastopil' City	63.74	8.38	54.68	1.80	0.84	10.93	0.89
Sumy	88.44	2.53	72.35	3.88	0.52	14.73	1.81
Ternopil'	97.07	0.43	16.79	19.60	0.18	57.45	3.19
Kharkiv	75.71	10.90	60.85	2.08	0.44	19.66	0.97
Kherson	83.40	3.27	70.23	2.23	0.54	18.13	0.97
Khmeln'nyts'kyi	93.44	1.19	75.46	3.25	0.42	15.40	1.56
Cherkasy	90.19	-	67.14	1.96	0.38	25.03	0.98
Chernivtsi	87.67	1.42	43.56	4.40	0.42	42.67	1.97
Chernihiv	90.77	1.46	74.15	6.69	0.40	12.34	0.90
Total	84.16	4.17	61.59	4.49	0.57	23.27	1.74

Source: Central Electoral Commission, as reprinted in *The Ukrainian Weekly* December 8, 1991: 5. Some earlier opinion polls reported various possible outcomes. Thus in Dnipropetrovs'ke in a preliminary November poll, Kravchuk received support from 73.3% of respondents (*Pravda* November 18, 1991: 2). The random sampling poll which was conducted in 12 oblasts in Western, Central, and Eastern Ukraine and which consisted of 11,397 respondents indicated that the popularity rating of the presidential candidates varied from region to region within the following limits: Hryniiov, 1-29%; Kravchuk, 9-44%; Lukianenko, 1-18%; Tkachenko, 0-3%; Chornovil, 6-40%; Iukhnovs'kyi, 6-41%; Taburians'kyi, 0-1%. The poll conducted in November, 1991 by the Ukrainian TV and Radio Public Opinion Service, predicted that more than 50% of the voters would support Leonid Kravchuk's bid for the presidency (Moscow Radio in English, November 23, 1991). The Rivne Public Opinion Service gave results of the poll as follows: Kravchuk—52%, Chornovil—31%.

The following table shows the vote distribution by regions:

TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF VOTE BY REGIONS

<i>Kravchuk</i>	<i>Chornovil</i>	<i>Lukianenko</i>	<i>Hryniiov</i>	<i>Iukhnovs'kyi</i>	<i>Taburians'kyi</i>
WEST					
		(L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'ke, Ternopil')			
13.99	66.80	12.03	0.60	3.64	0.16
NORTH-WEST					
		(Khmelnys'kyi, Rivne, Volyn')			
60.06	24.14	8.51	0.94	2.79	0.39
SOUTH-WEST					
		(Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia)			
50.79	35.12	4.69	1.37	2.40	0.40
CENTRAL					
		(Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Vinnytsia, Poltava)			
72.32	18.10	3.24	1.37	1.23	0.47
NORTH					
		(Kiev, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv)			
72.57	15.84	5.20	1.42	1.16	0.41
SOUTH					
		(Kherson, Odesa, Mykolaiv)			
71.08	15.34	2.42	5.76	0.93	0.48
EAST					
		(Luhans'ke, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs'ke, Zaporizhzhia)			
73.04	12.66	2.66	6.20	1.05	0.93
NORTH-EAST					
		(Sumy, Kharkiv)			
66.60	17.19	2.98	6.71	1.39	0.48
KRYM					
56.63	8.03	1.93	9.43	0.90	0.86
KIEV CITY					
56.13	26.71	6.36	3.54	3.53	0.54
SEVASTOPOL' CITY					
54.68	10.93	1.80	8.38	0.89	0.84

Source: Compilation by the author.

The results of the election clearly show that Leonid Kravchuk—with 61.59 percent of the vote—emerged as the strongest candidate. His weakest showing was in the three western oblasts of Ivano-Frankivs'ke, L'viv, and Ternopil', where he received less than 20 percent of the vote, and in Chernivtsi, where his support was less than 50 percent. In all other oblasts, as well as in the cities of Kiev and Sevastopil', he polled more than 50 percent, with the strongest support—60 to 80 percent, depending on the oblast—coming from voters of Central, Eastern, and Southern Ukraine.

Viacheslav Chornovil's strongest showing was in L'viv oblast' where he is the Chairman of the Oblast' Council. Pollsters call this the “native son” effect, a

phenomenon common in all open, democratic, multicandidate elections. Here he received over 70 percent of the vote, with Ivano-Frankivs'ke, Ternopil', and Chernivtsi, each giving him between 50 and 70 percent of the vote. In Zakarpattia, Kiev oblast', Kiev City, Rivne, Cherkasy and Volyn', he polled between 20 and 40 percent of the vote. In Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovs'ke, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovohrad, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmel'nyts'ke, Chernihiv and the city of Sevastopil' his support was between 10 and 20 percent of the vote. Only in Krym, Donetsk, and Luhans'ke did he receive less than 10 percent of the vote. This made him the strongest candidate after Kravchuk, with support in all regions of Ukraine. But with a total of only 23.27 percent of the vote, he was far behind the leader. The loss did not seem to bother Chornovil for, as he put it on election day, "I will have won these elections no matter what happens, even if I don't become the president. The pre-election campaign gave me the opportunity to travel all over Ukraine, to meet the people, and to politicize the East."²⁴

Levko Lukianenko who managed to poll 4.49 percent of the vote received his strongest support in Ternopil' oblast' (19.60 percent), followed by Rivne, Ivano-Frankivs'ke, Volyn', Chernihiv, Kiev City and Kiev oblast'. His support in other oblasts fell below 5 percent of the vote.

Volodymyr Hryniov's support was strongest in his native Kharkiv and the various regions in the East and South such as Dnipropetrovs'ke, Krym, Odesa, and Sevastopil'. But even in these areas he was behind Chornovil and managed to poll a total of only 4.17 percent of the vote, i.e., less than Lukianenko.

Ihor Iukhnovs'kyi's strongest showing was in his native L'viv, followed closely by Rivne, Kiev City, and Volyn'. He polled a total of 1.7 percent of the vote.

The sixth candidate, Leopold Taburians'kyi, received slightly less than 2.0 percent only in his native Dnipropetrovs'ke. In all other areas he did not manage to get much support and ended up with a total vote of 0.57 percent.

It is clear, therefore, that Kravchuk won roughly 2 out of 3 votes cast and that he could not have been defeated even if the opposition had agreed on a single candidate.

One reason for the result is that this was for all candidates a single issue campaign, i.e., Ukrainian independence. In this respect, running the referendum and the presidential elections on the same day greatly benefitted Kravchuk who, as an incumbent "head of state," was well-known in the country and beyond its borders. Kravchuk, therefore, did not have to address other pressing issues in the

²⁴ *The Ukrainian Weekly* December 8, 1991: 5.

campaign and was able to exploit his position and stature as a senior, experienced statesman.

For largely the same reasons, expectations that the election would foster organizational and programmatic development of the political parties also were not realized. The referendum—with its emphasis on independence—interfered and did not allow a clear articulation of economic or social policies, beyond the well-argued notion that life would generally be better in a country no longer kept in colonial chains. Evidently, this argument was quite persuasive not only among Ukrainians but all other nationalities, including some 11 million Russians.

The earliest public opinion polls on various presidential candidates were also not very reliable. The following table shows this clearly.

TABLE 8. PRESIDENTIAL OPINION POLLS

<i>Candidate</i>	<i>September 1991</i>	<i>October 1991</i>	<i>December 1, 1991</i>
Kravchuk	32.7%	38.3%	61.5%
Chornovil	8.1%	14.5%	23.2%
Lukianenko	2.6%	3.9%	4.4%
Hryniiov	?	3.2%	4.1%
Iukhnovs'kyi	6.8%	4.2%	1.7%
Taburians'kyi	?	?	0.5%

Source: Compiled by the author from various sources.

The presidential polls were able to indicate only general trends. For example, they showed a decline in Iukhnovs'kyi's support which began between September and October, continued for the rest of the campaign, and resulted in his obtaining only 1.7 percent of the total vote. All the other candidates—with the exception of Taburians'kyi, who was overlooked by the pollsters—registered steady growth during the entire campaign.

The regional distribution of support with respect to the two major candidates—Kravchuk and Chornovil—proved generally correct. Thus in the West (L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'ke, Ternopil'), the leader from the beginning was Chornovil. Between September and October, Kravchuk's support in that region declined by some 13 percent, while Chornovil's rose about 7.2 percent. In the North-West (Khmel'nyts'kyi, Rivne, Volyn'), both candidates were more or less even in September, but the October survey indicated better chances for Chornovil. This prediction, however, did not materialize and Kravchuk scored an impressive victory in the entire region. He consistently had a substantial lead over Chornovil in the South (Kherson, Odesa, Mykolaiv), the South-West

(Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia), the East (Luhans'ke, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovs'ke, Zaporizhzhia), and the North-East (Sumy, Kharkiv).

Unlike the referendum question, *Literaturna Ukraina*’s survey of its readers regarding the popularity of various political figures was quite interesting because it showed the dynamic changes taking place in Ukraine. The earlier survey tested the ratings of politicians as deputies to the Verkhovna Rada and not as presidential material. It is interesting to note that in this survey the two leading presidential candidates, Kravchuk and Chornovil, were far behind Iukhnovs'kyi and Lukianenko.

TABLE 9. LITERATURNA UKRAINA SURVEY
Favorite Deputies (May 1991)

	<i>Overall</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Communists</i>
Iukhnovs'kyi	39.7%	40.4%	38.3%	37.0%
Lukianenko	32.1%	35.0%	26.1%	18.8%
Chornovil	17.8%	18.1%	17.0%	7.6%
Kravchuk	11.8%	14.2%	6.2%	18.8%

Favorite Candidates (November 1991)

Chornovil	67.3%	71.3%	58.8%
Kravchuk	10.3%	7.8%	15.1%
Iukhnovs'kyi	8.7%	7.3%	12.6%
Lukianenko	8.3%	8.1%	8.8%

Source: V. Bebyk and V. Polokhalo “Duma pro Ukrainu,” *Literaturna Ukraina* 22, 27, 29, 31, 41 (1991); *Literaturna Ukraina* 47-48 (1991).

The November survey shows important changes in the rating of the presidential candidates. Kravchuk made the largest gain in the popularity contest. While in an earlier survey he held only eighth place, in the later survey he moved to second place. Chornovil continued to hold first place among the readers of *Literaturna Ukraina* (more than 24 percent of whom were from the West and over 20 percent from the Kiev region), but both Iukhnovs'kyi and Lukianenko experienced a slippage in support. Apparently, Iukhnovs'kyi’s abilities as an effective leader of the opposition Narodna Rada in the Ukrainian Parliament did not qualify him in the mind of the electorate as a good candidate for the presidency, although he continued to be popular among readers in the West, Kiev, and Odesa, i.e., in the intellectual centers, as the regional perspective (Table 10 clearly shows. Lukianenko’s credentials as a patriot and fighter for democratic ideals were beyond doubt, but he lacked a solid organizational base from which to launch a bid for the presidency. He had many supporters among the readers of *Literaturna Ukraina* but was not widely known among the masses. Kravchuk and Chornovil not only possessed such an organizational base but

were also well-known personalities, both in Ukraine and abroad. It was not surprising, therefore, that they garnered substantial support in the elections.

TABLE 10. POPULARITY OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES
Regional Perspective

<i>Region</i>	<i>Chornovil</i>	<i>Kravchuk</i>	<i>Iukhnovs'kyi</i>	<i>Lukianenko</i>
Kiev	18.5%	15.0%	20.0%	34.8%
North	2.3%	5.6%	2.2%	2.3%
Central	14.1%	11.3%	13.3%	4.6%
North-East	7.8%	11.3%	6.6%	-
North-West	7.2%	3.7%	8.8%	4.6%
East	12.1%	28.3%	6.6%	23.2%
West	27.4%	9.4%	26.6%	13.9%
North-West	3.7%	-	2.2%	2.3%
South	5.7%	7.5%	13.3%	9.3%
Krym	0.5%	3.7%	-	2.3%

Source: V. Bebyk and V. Polokhalo, "Duma pro Ukrainu," *Literaturna Ukraina* 47 (1991): 2.

One direct result of the elections is the realignment of political forces taking place in Ukraine. The center-left parties have formed an alliance "Nova Ukraina." With its relatively large parliamentary representation and a strong popular base in the East and South East, it hopes to exert its pressure on President Kravchuk.

The greatest impact of the elections, however, seems to be on Rukh itself which served as the launching pad for the presidential ambitions of Viacheslav Chornovil. One group in Rukh, led by I. Drach and M. Horyn', see the organization as a unifying force that should support the newly elected President. Mr. Chornovil, on the other hand, would like to see Rukh function as an opposition movement, with himself as top leader and a presidential hopeful. Should the latter come to pass, Rukh, as we know it, will probably cease to exist.