



Global Nonviolent Action Database

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Ukrainians overthrow dictatorship (Orange Revolution), 2004

- Colour Revolutions (2000s)

22 November

2004

to: 8 December

2004

Country: Ukraine

Location City/State/Province: *Kiev, and other cities in the Central and Western regions of the country*

Goals:

The campaign began in response to the fraudulent presidential elections and the campaigners demanded new, fair, and fraud-free elections. With new fair elections the campaigners expected presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko to win.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention › Symbolic presidential oath
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 038. Marches
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units
- 173. Nonviolent occupation
- 198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 006. Group or mass petitions
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors

- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 4th segment:

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention
- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 5th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Methods in 6th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 008. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
- 009. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
- 018. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
- 019. Wearing of symbols
- 020. Prayer and worship

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support
- 121. Refusal of public support
- 173. Nonviolent occupation

Additional methods (Timing Unknown):

- 033. Fraternalization
- 036. Performances of plays and music
- 037. Singing
- 038. Marches
- 048. Protest meetings
- 105. Establishment strike
- 117. General strike
- 122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance
- 162. Sit-in

Classifications

Classification:

Defense

Cluster:

Democracy

Group characterization:

- Ukrainian citizens in general
- business people
- students
- workers

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko and Politician Yulia Tymoshenko.

Partners:

Pora - youth organization

External allies:

Foreign governments and NGOs provided monetary support for the campaigners

Involvement of social elites:

Foreign government leaders supported negotiations and provide monetary support for the campaigners.

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

Additional notes on joining/exiting order:

The joining order of groups and elites is not known. Leaders and Partners participated from the very beginning. More and more Ukrainians joined the protests every day.

Segment Length: *Approximately 3 days*

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

The government of President Kuchma, who supported the election of Viktor Yanukovych and initiated the election fraud that the campaigners were protesting.

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

None known

Campaigner violence:

None known

Repressive Violence:

None known. President Kuchma had ordered 10,000 troops, stationed outside Kiev, to attack the demonstrators, but the Ukrainian intelligence services defied Kuchma's orders and prevented the attack.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

The campaigners were successful in gaining an open and fair run-off vote in which Yushchenko was determined as the next president of Ukraine.

The campaign grew to cover other parts of the country and nearly one million protesters in the streets of Kiev at some points.

The October 31, 2004, presidential elections in Ukraine pitted popular opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko against Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych. The incumbent president, Leonid Kuchma, had personally chosen Yanukovych as his successor, but their political party was losing popular support. Yushchenko, supported by a united opposition, was expected to win the election. However, the October 31 election yielded no winner, with each candidate receiving about 40% of the votes. At this point most opposition groups, such as the student group Pora, already suspected fraud. Pora set up a protest camp immediately, but other groups awaited the run-off vote.

This run-off vote took place on November 21, 2004, and official results from Kuchma's government showed that Yanukovych had won by 3%. Exit polls, on the other hand, showed Yushchenko winning by 11%. For the supporters of Yushchenko and his opposition coalition, this was a clear sign of election fraud. This perception was supported by evidence of ballot manipulation.

Yushchenko's supporters took to the streets in large-scale protest beginning on November 22, determined to defend their right to

free elections and to instate the rightful winner. These demonstrators congregated in the Maidan, Kiev's main square. The next day 500,000 people in Kiev marched to the parliament building. These demonstrators formed a sea of orange, the color of Yushchenko's campaign, by wearing orange ribbons and carrying orange flags.

Several other cities also refused to recognize the results of the election, believing Yushchenko to be the true winner. Yushchenko, in a largely symbolic act, entered parliament and took the presidential oath.

Prime Minister Yanukovich's supporters also held demonstrations, especially in the south and east. Miners that favored Yanukovich made their way to Kiev, but they were largely outnumbered by the pro-Yushchenko demonstrators. Furthermore, on November 24, the Central Election Commission announced Yanukovich as the winner, sparking even greater anger from the pro-Yushchenko groups.

Despite the confrontational nature and huge size of demonstrations, the pro-Yushchenko campaigners were determinedly nonviolent, with organizers like Pora having been influenced by the writings of Gene Sharp. The campaigners were also influenced by the previous nonviolent Colour Revolutions in Serbia (see "Serbians overthrow Milosevic (Bulldozer Revolution), 2000") and Georgia (see "Georgians overthrow a dictator (Rose Revolution), 2003").

The Yushchenko supporters continued their mass demonstrations in Kiev, with numbers nearing one million people. Demonstrators from outside Kiev also came to the capital to join in the protests. In order to support the presence in Kiev of demonstrators from around the country, the campaigners took over public buildings, offered private homes, and set up open kitchens. Protestors also occupied the Maidan and set-up tents to continue the spirit of protest day and night. The demonstrators gave flowers to the soldiers that surrounded the Maidan and played music for them. The Maidan became a site for speeches and musical entertainment in conjunction with the political protest. And each morning and night, a multi-denominational religious service was held in the square.

Citizens in other parts of the country also held local protests, demonstrations, and strikes. As the campaign grew, Yushchenko set up the Committee of National Salvation and called for a national strike until the true results of the election were honored.

On November 28, a high up government official (either the Interior Minister or the Chief of Staff) ordered troops to move in on the demonstrators. The higher ranks of soldiers refused the orders, however, and the attack never took place.

On December 1, the parliament joined the side of the campaigners, passing a vote of no-confidence in Prime Minister Yanukovich's government. On December 3, the Supreme Court followed suit, announcing that the election was fraudulent and Yanukovich's "victory" could not be recognized. Following this decision, parliament set up a new run-off election for December 26.

After negotiations that lasted until December 8, Yanukovich and Kuchma agreed to a new run-off vote, when Yushchenko and the parliament agreed to measures that would limit the future president's power.

On December 26, 2004, observers from around the world monitored the elections in order to prevent fraud. When all votes had been counted—this time without manipulation—Yushchenko won, 52% to Yanukovich's 44%. The "Orange Revolution" by Ukrainians was successful.

Research Notes

Influences:

This campaign was influenced by the democracy campaign in Serbia in 2000 (see "Serbians overthrow Milosevic (Bulldozer Revolution), 2000") and the Rose Revolution in Georgia (see "Georgians overthrow a dictator (Rose Revolution), 2003"). It was also influenced by an earlier campaign in Ukraine: Ukrainians protest for regime change (Ukraine Without Kuchma),

2000-2003 (1)

Sources:

Subtelny, Orest. Ukraine: A History, 4th ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. pp634-9.

Wilson, Andrew. "Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' of 2004: The Paradoxes of Negotiation." in Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present. eds. Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Additional Notes:

See also:

Andrew Wilson (March 2006). Ukraine's Orange Revolution. Yale University Press.

Anders Åslund and Michael McFaul (January 2006). Revolution in Orange: The Origins of Ukraine's Democratic Breakthrough. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"Orange Revolution," documentary film, A Force More Powerful Films, Steve York producer.

www.orangerevolutionmovie.com

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

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