

**Iryna Matsyshyna, PhD in Political science**  
*Odesa I.I. Mechnikov National University,*  
*Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, Ukraine*

## **POLITICIANS AS SYMBOLS DURING POLITICAL CONFRONTATION (UKRAINE. 1994 – 2004)**

There are instruments which can help to find logic and mechanisms for constructing political reality, to find the relationship between the author and the reader, the socio-cultural and political environment. And the semiotic approach gives us such possibility. For political scientists, signs and symbols are primarily a text, which consists of words, images, sounds, and gestures. It is a certain sign system, which analysis allows understanding how the use of signs creates a sense. Of course, a channel that transmits a message plays an important role, and due to its influence semiotic texts receive their additional information. On the other hand, political institutes involved in the production of messages communicate with the audience, therefore, the peculiarity of its perception also forms the specifics of texts. In general, the concept of "political semiotics" may be understood as the use of symbols in order to stabilize political power. Thereby, the main subject of this study is how that stabilization was taking place during the presidency of L. Kuchma in Ukraine.

**Keywords:** presidential administration, V. Yushchenko, V. Yanukovych, G. Gongadze, Gas Princess, L. Kuchma, symbols, technologies, films.

### **Dualism of power**

Unlike the dualism of power during L. Kravchuk's presidency, when the confrontation was occurring between the President and the Parliament, the era of L. Kuchma was determined by the imbalance between the President and the Prime minister. In the beginning, the Prime minister was V. Masol, a native of the Chernihiv region. Thanks to him, there was a balance between Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk political groups. Then in 1995, the executive power was headed by a representative of central Ukraine E. Marchuk, but in 1996 he was replaced by Dnipropetrovsk natives P. Lazarenko and V. Pustovoitenko. The next prime ministers associated with Western Ukraine – V. Yushchenko, the South – A. Kinakh, and the East – V. Yanukovych, with their appearance in executive power demonstrated not so much the desire to consolidate the nation, but the policy of correcting mistakes by counterbalancing the regional affiliation of their predecessor.

The establishment of a new state body – the Presidential Administration, which received new functions, led to open presidential interference in the activities of the Parliament and the Cabinet of Ministers. This body deepened old conflicts and created new ones, and its Heads – Dmytro Tabachnyk, Volodymyr Lytvyn, Yevhen Kushnarev, and then Viktor Medvedchuk – during the crisis were discharger-figures for the President. The level of relations inside the power depended on their activity. Therefore, it is possible to distinguish several levels of conflicts.

### **Presidential-parliamentary confrontation**

1999 was marked by an open confrontation between the Parliament and the President. In order to prevent L. Kuchma from the second term of office, on January 12, the Communists introduced to the Verkhovna Rada a bill on the change in the state system. There were two issues proposed not in favor of L. Kuchma: the return to the system of councils and the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada as the head of the country. "Some People's Deputies accuse the Presidential Administration of allegedly sending directives to regional authorities with the call to organize a referendum on deputies' immunity, while the Speaker of the Parliament calls on the regional authorities to resist the people's initiative"<sup>1</sup>. After the presidential elections in November 1999, when L. Kuchma has been reelected for the second term of the presidency thanks to a

<sup>1</sup> *Україна Молода* (1999), 5(1079), 1.

trick successfully played together with the Communists, the formation of a parliamentary majority began. This caused a maximally possible replacement of the parliamentary leadership in order to support and promote the interests of the incumbent President. According to O. Lisnychuk, in 1999 – 2000 the main coordinator of "interaction between the President, his Administration and the Verkhovna Rada" showed up; it was Oleksandr Volkov, whom the media defined as the "Managing Director of the Parliament"<sup>1</sup>. The influence of this Member of Parliament, who was also the Head of the "Regions' Revival" faction, on the achievement of the required number of votes during the presidential election, led to a political crisis. Interestingly, it was the parliamentary movement that launched the campaign "Ukraine without Kuchma", which caused a significant impact on the President's activities. In 2000, Oleksandr Moroz from the rostrum officially declared the involvement of V. Lytvyn, as the Head of the Presidential Administration, and Y. Kravchenko, Minister of Internal Affairs, in the disappearance of journalist Georgiy Gongadze. The Parliament initiated a new wave of distrust to L. Kuchma.

After the parliamentary elections in 2002, when opposition parties came to power, Viktor Medvedchuk was appointed as the Head of the Presidential Administration. His main task was to prevent the creation of a parliamentary majority among the supporters of Yulia Tymoshenko and Viktor Yushchenko. On August 24, 2002, in his television address, L. Kuchma made a statement about the need for political reforms. Thus, he made an attempt to intercept the demands of the opposition, which were called by many analysts the "revolution from above".

A new scenario of confrontation between presidential and parliamentary opposition forces unfolded in court. At first, criminal cases against opposition leaders were initiated: about the seizure of the telecentre, and a little later – the seizure of the hall of the Presidential Administration. This was followed by a retaliatory move from the opposition: a criminal case was initiated against the President of Ukraine. The presidential-parliamentary confrontation ended up in a revolution, and mainly because opposition used against L. Kuchma the same methods that he used against the opposition.

### **The confrontation between the President and the Prime Minister**

Parliamentary and presidential election campaigns, constitutional and political reforms, preparation and holding of a referendum were a challenge to understanding and dialogue between political forces. But in conditions of imbalance and authoritarianism, other methods became effective. Mostly, the personal offenses taken by the President were made public as a political decision. For example, in a statement by the press service of the President regarding the resignation of Yevhen Marchuk from the position of Prime Minister in 1996, it read as follows: "...The Prime Minister Y. Marchuk has not ensured, as the situation requires, the effective and sustainable functioning of the government. And recently, instead of daily routine work on the organization of its activities, he concentrated his efforts on creating his own political image"<sup>2</sup>. Kost Bondarenko writes that before signing up Marchuk's resignation order Leonid Kuchma had allegedly asked other ministers, showing the first iron-sinister notes in his voice: "I will not ask who is "for". But I ask who is "against"?"<sup>3</sup>.

The appointment of Pavlo Lazarenko as Prime Minister led to a confrontation between him and the Head of the Presidential Administration D. Tabachnyk, which ended up in a loud international scandal. And the conflict with Viktor Yushchenko engendered the emergence of a new opposition leader, who managed to unite the country against L. Kuchma himself.

### **Inside-parliamentary confrontation**

Uncoordinated speeches of the President and Speaker abroad have become a real internal and international scandal. Oleksandr Tkachenko made a statement that Ukraine had to provide military and technical assistance to fraternal Yugoslavia while Kuchma positioned himself as the main peacekeeper; it forced the President to make excuses on this issue during a working visit to Germany. It was the first case in the history of Ukraine when the Parliament had split in relation to the personality of the speaker O. Tkachenko. In order to eliminate or save the head of the Verkhovna Rada, the deputies held meetings in two different places. The majority gathered in the Ukrainian House, the minority – in the walls

<sup>1</sup> *Інституційні зміни політичної системи сучасної України: оцінка стану та напрями оптимізації: аналітична доповідь* (2014). Київ: ІПІЕНД ім. І.Ф. Кураса НАН України, 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Україна молода* (1996), 47(463), 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Бондаренко, К. (2009). Леонід Кучма. Київ, 85.*

of the Parliament. On January 21, 2000, the majority, headed by V. Medvedchuk, made a decision to remove O. Tkachenko from office. All this time the President did not intervene, but when the decision was made, he took the side of the majority.

Unlike the conflict in 2000, which broke out around the figure of speaker O. Tkachenko, where the President's tactics was to wait for the actions of V. Medvedchuk, in 2003 there were open clashes between the SDPU(u) and "Our Ukraine". The Head of the Presidential Administration Viktor Medvedchuk has openly demonstrated the attitude of the President. He, as the leader of the SDPU(u), appealed to the left and centrist political forces to create a coalition for the preservation of political stability in the country. In turn, "Our Ukraine" claimed that such statement was an attempt to split the opposition.

As Oleg Protsyk writes, in average L. Kuchma issued over 1200 decrees per year, which is much larger amount than that of his predecessor L. Kravchuk<sup>1</sup>. But most of them were the decisions to introduce new rules, appointments of officials, state awards. Things that could have been made as a simple say-so were presented by Kuchma as a presidential decree or a resolution of the Constitution's guarantor. The desire to keep everything under control denied the notion of an equal democratic principle of government and did not allow the country to move forward. In the 2002 United Nations Human Development Program (UNDP) annual report, Ukraine was ranked 80th among 173 countries. Among the countries of the former Soviet Union, only Moldova (105th) and Tajikistan (112th) were found to be below. This UN annual study included average per capita income, life expectancy, educational level and availability, respect for human rights and condition of the environment.

As soon as the opposition identified Viktor Yushchenko as the only candidate for president, his political consultants began to use the phrase "people's candidate" and "people's president" with his name. But when after the third round he received only 6.5% more votes than Viktor Yanukovich, his supporters no longer used these words after the victory.

Four electoral campaigns showed different images of politicians who were deliberately created by their consultants or consultants of their competitors.

### Images of politicians

1) L. Kuchma changed his positioning from time to time. This was connected to the change of leaders of the Presidential Administration and a systemic confrontation with the parliamentary opposition. In this struggle the President sought public support, especially during the referendum and political reform. As Vitaliy Portnikov writes, the role of the father of nation has never been entrenched with Kuchma, "because he hardly concealed his true thoughts and feelings about the situation in which he found himself – and the father of nation must be internally monumental, and here, I am sorry, no makeup artists will help"<sup>2</sup>. Director's instinct, which was accumulated during the years of management in the industrial enterprise, created the image more of a "host".

2) The Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada Oleksandr Tkachenko was called "squared Lukashenko" because he often forgot that abroad he was representing the government, but not his own position. When he was on a working visit to Belarus, he made a statement about the eternal aspirations of Ukrainians to have common money and a common army with the Russians. And during hostilities in Yugoslavia, he made a proposal of military-technical assistance to this country, while the President refused to involve Ukraine in this conflict and positioned himself as a peacemaker.

3) Yulia Tymoshenko was associated with the image of the Gas Princess, and then with the Budget Princess. The newspaper note "Gas Princess" was about how Yulia Tymoshenko received the Order of the Holy Martyr Varvara in the Holy Transfiguration Cathedral of Kirovograd from the hands of the local bishop<sup>3</sup>. When she was first arrested in 2001, her symbol of the martyr was created. She was imprisoned as a thief, and 42 days later she left her cell as a hero. Prior to this, in 1995, she was detained at Zaporizhzhia Airport, when transporting about 26 thousand dollars to Moscow in her handbag. She spent one and a half days behind bars. At the height of the action "Ukraine without Kuchma", where she actively participated, she was arrested again. Formally, she was charged with non-appearance to the investigator, but everyone understood that the authorities were trying to isolate her. It was on this day when President L. Kuchma,

<sup>1</sup> Protsyk, O. (2005). Constitutional politics and presidential power in Kuchma's Ukraine. *Problems of post-communism*, Vol.52, № 5, 27.

<sup>2</sup> In *Дзеркало тижня* (1997), 44(161), 2.

<sup>3</sup> In *Україна молода* (1998), 21(843), 2.

Prime Minister V. Yushchenko and Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada I. Pliushch delivered an address accusing the participants of the action in the expansion of fascism. This address made from Yulia Tymoshenko a heroine and after release from jail she started to appear with a braided hair. The authorities tried to discredit her image of the martyr by creating for her an image of a thief and P. Lazarenko's partner in bribery.

4) Viktor Yushchenko while being the Prime Minister was considered as a "*jeune premier*", and after his resignation, he became a true leader of the nation, who received great support from the people. Despite the desire of the power, by all means, to create for him an image of unsuccessful, indecisive politician, people's faith later led him to power and to the presidency.

5) Yevhen Marchuk was positioned as a "general order", and was associated with Russian general Alexander Lebed. But after his resignation "for the formation of his own political image", this image of "general order" was taken over by Gennady Moskal; from 1997 to 2000 he was the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine – the head of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Simferopol.

6) Pavlo Lazarenko for the year of his premiership was positioned as a "host", "cool prime minister" and an experienced manager, who was able to raise funds. After his arrest, the image of the host collapsed and, with the help of domestic and foreign mass media the image of the "bribe-taker" was created.

7) Oleksandr Moroz was covered by the media as a fair "left" leader, but the linguistic essence behind the "left" did not allow him to become the President of the country.

8) Viktor Medvedchuk deliberately created for himself the image of the "defender". In 1997 the newspaper *Mirror of the Week* published about him the article with this particular header<sup>1</sup>.

9) Nataliya Vitrenko tried to position herself as a "mother-defender", but her excessive emotional speeches and provocative appeals secured her the image of a "Trojan horse".

In 2004 the images of the main politicians were balanced between the images that were formed by their political consultants and the images created by their competitors' consultant. V. Yushchenko was between the savior of the country and the nationalist puppet of the West, and V. Yanukovych between the personification of stability and the former criminal.

Principles of organization of state power established by L. Kuchma were not instruments to empower regions and subjects of local government, but instruments for strengthening the presidential power. The protection of corporate and personal interests resulted in a series of scandals that have later transformed from internal into international. And their symbolic coloring showed a corrupted criminal country.

### **Technologies of the formation of political images**

Technologies which created the images of politicians were based on classical schemes: the artificial creation of myths, the spread of rumors, hanging of labels, the organization and holding of rituals, the use of bombastic rhetoric, silencing, ignoring, mirror technology, etc. It is also interesting that together with mass media, which was the main channel for the spread of information and development of these technologies, books have also become a means of mass communication that formed a certain attitude towards politicians. On a level of documentaries and musical performances, writers joined the ideological confrontation. The politicians themselves often became writers. In 1998 Vyacheslav Pikhovshek presented the book "Dnipropetrovsk family". And then was "Dnipropetrovsk family – 2". In the foreword it is said that "natives of Dnipropetrovsk" are divided into the "strongest" and "united". Analysts of the Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Studies referring to the words of the secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Volodymyr Horbulin, said that Leonid Kuchma's presidential team was "united"; and Pavlo Lazarenko's team was the "strongest"... Every "family" should have had a "father". The "Dnipropetrovsk family" had as many as eighteen "fathers", as presented in the annex to the book. The first Soviet "father" in the list is Leonid Brezhnev, Ukrainian – Volodymyr Shcherbytsky<sup>2</sup>.

In 2002, a member of the "Batktivshchyna" faction Dmytro Chobit presented the book "Narcissus, or Strokes to the political portrait of Viktor Medvedchuk", in which he collected documents and evidence of the biography of Viktor Medvedchuk. In particular, about his imprisonment under Article 102

<sup>1</sup> In *Дзеркало тижня* (1997), 47(164), 4.

<sup>2</sup> In *Україна молода* (1998), 25(847), 2.

of the Criminal Code, advocacy in the case of Vasyl Stus, etc. The book was forbidden, and the prosecution of the author stopped in a few years.

In November 2003, when the "Rose Revolution" was unfolding in Georgia, L. Kuchma in Moscow presented his book "Ukraine is not Russia". In the book, the author showed in detail the differences between the two peoples, national experience, geopolitical direction, the history of development, which indicated Ukraine's own path of development to which it had the right. This warning from a strategic partner of a neighboring country that Ukraine is not Russia has caused a shock in the Russian political elite.

The cinema was also used as a means of creating a certain influence. The Ukrainian viewer adored watching criminal drama series on Ukrainian TV-channels. 80% of them were films of the Russian production. And the widely advertised domestic series "Birthday of the Bourgeois" consisted mostly of Russian actors, who spoke Russian, and, again, it was dedicated to the fight against criminal gangs. The heroes of such TV series as "Brigade", "Bandit Petersburg", "Destructive Power", "Bourgeois" were not so much the examples of the fight against criminality, but rather romantic images.

They achieved success, respect, and love because of violations of law or because of the ability to negotiate with criminality. This formed a cult of corruption and crime. In 2003 the journal "*Correspondent*" shortlisted television series which were the most popular in those days. Among the 15 TV-series broadcast on Ukrainian TV channels, neither was made in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>.

At the end of Kuchma's presidency, Ukrainian TV channels started to make joint projects with Russian channels. The TV channel "Novyi", along with TC "STS", shoot a series "Tomorrow will be tomorrow", and then independently "The sky in polka dots". Criminal topics were replaced by multi-series melodrama.

Joint projects were created with Polish filmmakers too. In 1999 Polish director Jerzy Hoffman filmed "With Fire and Sword", in which Bogdan Stupka played the role of Bogdan Khmelnytskyi. In 2001, the 9-series picture "The Black Council", based on the novel by Panteleimon Kulish, was released but later cut off. For Russian movie rental, it was renamed to "Zaporozhian Sich". And in 2002 was released a film by Ukrainian director Y. Iliencko "The Prayer for Hetman Mazepa", the first big-budget film (\$ 2.8 million), was presented at the Berlin International Film Festival, but the Russian Ministry of Culture banned its demonstration in Russia. In Ukraine this film was shown by «ICTV» channel but rated «16+» i.e. it was shown for a limited audience. In 2003 Oles Sanin directed a film "Mamay", in which stones and a rock were metaphors of freedom and death for freedom. "I'm going mother, I'm going father / I'm going to death / Farewell brothers, farewell sister / Whom do I leave you with," said the beginning of the film. The film was shot at the request of the Ministry of Culture. Interestingly, for the whole period, 228 films were produced under the order of this Ministry. But there were 94 films in 1994, and only 4 in 2003<sup>2</sup>.

And exactly during this period Russia started to shoot movies, in which the subject of Afghanistan and Chernobyl was switched to the subject of Ukrainian Banderites. Russian films *Brother and Brother-2*, directed by A. Balabanov, revealed a new page in the image of Ukrainians as the Ukrainian mafia. And although in musical accompaniment of "Brother-2" V. Vakarchuk sings in the background, the subject of the Crimea, the great Russian brothers, Banderites and criminal Ukrainians was the main in the film. For example, here are some phrases from the film: "We, Russians, do not deceive each other", "Why did you come here. Blew two wars and Crimea, surrendered Russian people", "You, bastards, will answer me for Sevastopol", etc. Ukrainian mafia in Los Angeles is also shown in the film "The Italian Job" (2003).

Political events and scandals in Ukraine have become subjects for films made by European producers. Documentary TV-films "Bring me the head of Georgiy Gongadze" and "Piar" were demonstrated in 2002, and, as many believed, in order to influence the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. In the same year the film "Killing the story" was released, where the main character, Oleksii Podolskyi, was very similar in his history to G. Gongadze, but unlike the journalist, he survived.

Historical events of the World War II became the subject of the British documentary "The SS in Britain". The hidden anti-Ukrainian hints were eventually false, but the film gained its popularity in the West in 2000-2001. "The Ukrainian soldiers of the 14 division were accused of crimes against humanity, allegedly committed by them during the suppression of the Warsaw uprising in August 1944 and the Slovak

<sup>1</sup> In *Корреспондент* (2003), 28(67), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Фільми, створені на замовлення Міністерств культури України. Міністерство культури України. <[http://mincult.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art\\_id=245059735&cat\\_id=245038183](http://mincult.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=245059735&cat_id=245038183)>.

uprising in autumn 1944. Due to the international publicity, the official London even threatened to deprive of citizenship and deport guilty persons if the allegations were confirmed"<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, Ukraine was attracting Europeans in the sphere of tourism development. Europeans started to film movies about Crimea and the Carpathians. As R. Ofitsynskyi writes, "German filmmakers from Dusseldorf produced a documentary about inhabitants of the Carpathians in four countries (Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, and Romania), where they spent 53 days. Under the direction of Andrzej Klamt in October 2003 they filmed two episodes in the Ivano-Frankivsk region"<sup>2</sup>. The film experience of Odessa and its coloring expressed itself in the screen version of "12 Chairs" by German filmmakers. "Almost all roles in this eclectic film were performed by Odessa artists. Ostap Bender was impersonated by the head of the comic troupe "Masks" and deputy of the city council Georgiy Deliev"<sup>3</sup>. And in 2002 the "Eisenstein" was filmed in Odessa.

Ukrainian researcher Pavlo Leno, analyzing the image of Ukrainians in western cinematograph, says that in European action movies the enemy is sought in the ideologically alien country and Ukraine has become this country (e.g., films "Police Story 4: First Strike" (1995) and "The Order" (2001). Analyzing the rhetoric of these films, the scholar writes: "Those subjects dominate that originated in the 1980's, when only Chernobyl, the remnants of nuclear weapons, criminal groups, and communism were associated with Ukraine and Ukrainians. Ukraine is shown as a representative of the militarized third world, alien and life-threatening outskirts of Europe, which geographic location is often unclear or missing"<sup>4</sup>.

In contrast to the Russian cartoon "Masiania", which operated on post-Soviet stereotypes, the project "Left and Right", about two brothers who were eggs, was launched in Ukraine. The creators of the series assured that the cartoons would be based on situations that resemble the life in the post-Soviet area.

For Ukraine, the film about the doomsday has become symbolic because of the tragedy that took place on November 30, 1998. On this day, hundreds of Ukrainian schoolchildren in Chervonograd (Lviv oblast) were brought to the cinema to watch the popular movie "Armageddon". After watching the movie, 4 children died in a human stampede in a dark room. 15 children were hospitalized with varying injuries. Media called this tragedy "Chervonograd's Khodynka".

## Conclusions

On the background of tragedies and scandals, the heroic subjects of the country were in a constant search. The artificial systemic formation of the hero by the authorities forced the people to choose the hero, around which the nation fatefully unified in 2004. During the rule of L. Kuchma and his Presidential Administration, they failed to create a hero of the nation from him. Numerous scandals and parliamentary opposition fixed his image of the "director of the plant". In his turn, Leonid Kuchma, by all means, prevented the growth of the authority of politicians he brought to power. For example, Yevhen Marchuk, whom he perceived as a competitor in the 1999 elections and who was dismissed for the formation of his own political image. On the other hand, such precautions released dismissed politics from his protectorate and gave them much more respect and support than next to him. It turned out that it was easier to become the leader of the nation in opposition to the President than in his team. At the end of 2004, this was understood by Viktor Yanukovich, who in the second round of the presidential race announced that he was leaving the team of L. Kuchma and going into opposition. During the television debates, he strongly criticized the reign of L. Kuchma, hinting that he himself had nothing to do with him. At the beginning of his premiership Viktor Yanukovich declared that he had revived Donetsk, so he could revive the whole country, that's why at the end of 2004 he returned to Donetsk again. But the image of a regional leader, who would be able to adjust the entire country to one region, did not provoke national interest. And Viktor Yanukovich's defeat became L. Kuchma's defeat.

<sup>1</sup> Офіцинський, Р. (2005). *Політичний розвиток незалежної України (1991–2004) в аспекті європейської ідентичності (на матеріалах періодики Заходу)*. Ужгород, 434.

<sup>2</sup> Офіцинський, Р. (2005). *Політичний розвиток незалежної України (1991–2004) в аспекті європейської ідентичності (на матеріалах періодики Заходу)*. Ужгород, 374.

<sup>3</sup> Офіцинський, Р. (2005). *Політичний розвиток незалежної України (1991–2004) в аспекті європейської ідентичності (на матеріалах періодики Заходу)*. Ужгород, 375-376.

<sup>4</sup> Леню, П. (2014). *Україна та українці в образах та стереотипах західного кіно (1991-2013 рр.)*. Науковий вісник Ужгородського університету. Серія: Історія, 1(32), 133.

The path from the "hero–anti-hero–apparently hero again" was made by P. Lazarenko. The dismissal of Yevhen Marchuk for the "formation of his own political image" ended up with his replacement by Pavlo Lazarenko. The young, enthusiastic Dnipropetrovsk's native gave hopes for a united, command work of the executive power. The newspaper "Ukrayina Moloda", wrote about 344 deputies' votes in his support in 1996 and printed a photo entitled "A Cool Parliament Gives Consent to the Cool Prime Minister"<sup>1</sup>. The wide popular support of the new Prime Minister occurred after an assassination attempt on him, which took place in July 1996. The explosion was under the car when the tuple with the Prime Minister moved to the airport. Later, P. Lazarenko claimed that this attempt was organized against him by Kuchma's people.

But over time, the "cool Prime Minister" became the main figure in relation to which this newspaper began to disclose materials on enrichment. On June 20, 1997, №110 (691) of "Ukrayina Moloda" published the article "Premier's summer cottage" on the denationalization of the premier's summer cottage No.14 in Pushcha-Voditsa. On June 26, 1996 the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers №672-rs was published, in which "in order to save money spent on the maintenance of the building number 14, as well as the houses number 17 and 17-a, which are in the operational management of the rest house "Pushcha Voditsa "... in case of necessity to carry out in the prescribed manner ... privatization or a long-term rent of these houses"<sup>2</sup>. And after his resignation the newspaper began a series of articles, where the documents on stealing of state property by P. Lazarenko were printed; the article used the interesting phrase "birds of the nest of Dnipropetrovsk".

In 2004, in connection with the lack of confidence in the power of L. Kuchma, the attitude towards P. Lazarenko began to change: from anti-hero, he became a political prisoner. In June 2000, the Geneva court sentenced Lazarenko to 18 months of imprisonment and confiscation of \$ 6.6 million for money laundering. And on May 7, 2004, the San Francisco court removed most of the charges from P. Lazarenko. Although in the national memory he remained a corrupted official and a thief, his return to the country at that time would have made him a victim of the regime.

Since 2000, confidence in Viktor Yushchenko, who at that time was Prime Minister, was beginning to grow. For example, on April 3, 2000, "Ukraina Moloda" printed the article "100 days without euphoria": "Viktor Yushchenko has something to report"<sup>3</sup>. Although in April 2004, when he had the highest level of trust, "Correspondent" gave him the 4th place in the rating of the most influential people. In the front were L. Kuchma, V. Medvedchuk, V. Yanukovych. When in 2001, 266 signatures were collected in the Parliament on the issue of non-confidence towards him, and then a cassette scandal broke out, Viktor Yushchenko was the winner. Then Igor Yukhnovskiy said: "We lost the Prime Minister but obtained the nation's leader". In contrast to many politicians, he was not involved in this scandal; he went over to the opposition, which gave him chances to gain public confidence in 2004. However, when in 2003 the nation determined the great Ukrainians, V. Yushchenko then gained only 4.2%. The first two places were occupied by the historical figures – T. Shevchenko and B. Khmelnytskyi. And on the third place was occupied by the Klitschko brothers (22.3%). By the way, sport gradually turned into a political trump card. The confrontation between Grygoriy Surkis and Rinat Akhmetov leads to a sporting confrontation between "Shakhtar" and "Dynamo Kyiv". Fans for football teams are distributed accordingly to the geographical dimension of the country, which territorially influenced the confrontation between the West and East of Ukraine during the Velvet Revolution.

But thanks to the sporting success of Ukrainian athletes at international competitions, Europeans open Ukraine from a new perspective. Klitschko boxers have become a symbol of a strong country; Sergiy Bubka's World record in 1994; the first Ukrainian "gold" at the Olympics was in 1996 of a wrestler Vyacheslav Oliynyk; "golden fish" Yana Klochkova, a gymnast Liliya Podkopaieva, basketball player Oleksandr Vovkov, football players Oleksandr Shovkovskiy and Andriy Shevchenko, coach Valeriy Lobanovskiy – became heroes of the country. Many of them, like the singers, have chosen their path in politics.

<sup>1</sup> In *Україна молода* (1996), 65(481), 3.

<sup>2</sup> In *Україна молода* (1997), 110(91), 3.

<sup>3</sup> In *Україна молода* (2000), 60(1380), 3.

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