

25 JUL 1990

# Kiev runs up the national flag

SURGING THROUGH the streets of Kiev yesterday tens of thousands of Ukrainians met at the steps of the city council to witness the raising of the first national flag on a public building in the Ukrainian capital.

Marchers shouted "glory to the Ukraine" and "independence". Clearly opposed to the outcome of Monday's Ukrainian presidential election when parliament voted in Ivan Kravchuk, the second secretary of the Communist Party, there were angry cries from the crowd of "out with Kravchuk". Mr Kravchuk's main opponent in the election was Professor Igor Yukhnovsky, the head of the Democratic Bloc, a loose grouping of opposition forces in parliament.

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From Susan Viets  
in Kiev

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The flag was consecrated outside St Lucia, one of Kiev's oldest and most magnificent golden-domed cathedrals. Leonid Chygunovsky, an activist in Rukh, the opposition movement, said: "The consecration caused some tension because the Catholics wanted their priest to bless the flag, but the Ukrainian Orthodox insisted they should be in charge of the ceremony. We finally chose the Orthodox priest."

In the western Ukrainian city of Lvov, the national flag has fluttered over the city council and opera for three months.

While nationalism has been slower to spread to Kiev and the russified east, signs are clear that people here now back outright independence for the Ukraine.

Traffic came to a standstill as enthusiastic Ukrainians stretched across the city's main boulevard to see the flag go up. Some stood on top of trolley buses, their drivers only just back at work after a 12-hour unannounced break.

This was Kiev's first transport strike. Many city residents were unable to reach work as all bus and tram drivers were out demanding higher pay. It is unclear who organised the walk-out, but a spokesman at Kiev's No. 4 trolley bus depot said the strikers' demands had been met.

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