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Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations of Research on Social and Cultural Processes in the Environment of the T titular Nation of the Ukrainian SSR during the 1960s and 1970s

Koncepcyjne i teoretyczne podstawy badania społeczno-kulturowych procesów w środowisku tytularnego narodu Ukraińskiej SRR w latach sześćdziesiątych i siedemdziesiątych XX wieku

• Abstract •

The article considers the Conceptual and theoretical foundations of research on social and cultural processes in the environment of the titular nation of the Ukrainian SSR during the 1960s and 1970s. It is characterized by the semantic content of concepts of “titular nation” and “indigenous people” in the Ukrainian SSR, identified primarily with Ukrainians, who were united by a single language, faith, spirituality, national traditions, customs, culture, ethnic origin and ancient residence on the territory of Ukraine, the official name of which was determined by their nationality. The conceptual components of the research are interpretation of the following concepts of: “Ukrainian ethnos”, “Ukrainian ethnic territory” or “Ukrainian ethnic land”, “national majority”, “national minority”, “nation-state”, “nonconformism”, “counterculture”, “sixties”, “dissidence”, “Ukrainian diaspora”, etc.

• Abstrakt •

W artykule omówiono koncepcyjne i teoretyczne podstawy badania społeczno-kulturowych procesów w środowisku tytularnego narodu USRR w latach sześćdziesiątych i siedemdziesiątych XX wieku. Artykuł przedstawia analizę kategorii teoretycznej pojęć „narodu tytularnego” i „rdzennej ludności” w USRR, identyfikowanych przede wszystkim z Ukraińcami, których łączyły jeden język, wiara, duchowość, tradycje narodowe, zwyczaje, wielowiekowa kultura, pochodzenie etniczne i pierwotne miejsce zamieszkania na terytorium Ukrainy, którego oficjalna nazwa została określona przez ich narodowość. Elementami koncepcyjnymi proponowanego badania są analizy następujących pojęć: „ukraiński etnos”, „ukraińskie terytorium etniczne” lub „ukraińska ziemia etniczna”, „większość narodowa”, „mniejszość narodowa”, „państwo narodowe”, „nonkonformizm”, „kontrkultura”, „lata sześćdziesiąte”, „dysydencja”, „ukraińska diaspora” itp.

Research of the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the outlined topic makes it possible to resolve controversial issues which have not been adequately covered in historical science, also makes it possible to specify the process of national self-expression of Ukrainians through cultural space, and allows to get new assessments, judgments and conclusions.

Keywords: Ukrainian nation; Ukrainians; Ukrainian ethnos; national self-assertion; national consciousness; theorizing; concepts; argument

Badanie koncepcyjnych i teoretycznych podstaw podjętego w ramach pracy tematu umożliwiło rozstrzygnięcie szeregu kontrowersyjnych kwestii, które nie znalazły jeszcze odpowiedniego pokrycia w naukach historycznych, a zarazem pozwoliło określić proces narodowej ekspresji Ukraińców poprzez przestrzeń kulturową i otworzyło przestrzeń dla uzyskania nowych ocen, osądów i wniosków.

Słowa kluczowe: naród ukraiński; Ukraińcy; etnos ukraiński; autoafirmacja narodowa; świadomość narodowa; teoretyzowanie; pojęcia; argumentacja

Formulation of scientific problem and its significance

Theoretical thinking involves the principles on which certain research is based and allows historians to develop and improve their argument, elevating scientific research and its results to a significantly higher level. To cover a particular historical topic comprehensively, researchers should pay their attention to the diversity of scientific theoretical approaches, balance their principles, and understand their cognitive potential and the framework of the restrictions.

With the independence of Ukraine, democratization of socio-political life, opening access to many archival sources, favorable conditions were created for free, unbiased, methodologically and theoretically balanced study of the Soviet past of the Ukrainian nation. Without theoretical thinking, scientific concepts and historical studies are doomed to become only a logical collection of facts, therefore the importance of a careful attitude to the theoretical foundations of historical studies always remains relevant.

Research analysis

The issue of conceptual and theoretical foundations of studying social and cultural life in the Ukrainian SSR was highlighted in the works of such authors as: O. Antonyuk, V. Volobuev, & M. Holovaty (2005); V. Romantsov (2005); O. Chirkov (2006); S. Boyko (2007); Yu. Kovaliv (2007); D. Langewiesche (2008); H. Vyshslavskyi & O. Sydor-Ghibelinda (2010); V. Eutukh (2011); P. Gornostay (2011); I. Kresina & V. Yavir (2011); O. Bazhan (2013); Yu. Kaganov (2019) and others.

However, in the scientific literature the topic remains understudied. This enables us to continue working in this promising area.

The aim of the article

Thus, the focus of this article is the study of the conceptual-theoretical foundations, fundamental principles of the study of socio-cultural processes in the environment of the titular nation of the Ukrainian SSR, and the self-affirmation of the Ukrainian nation during the 1960s and 1970s.

The main material and justification of study results

The urgency of the processes of the Ukrainian nation-building, and the struggle for the revival of the statehood of the Ukrainian people during the 1960s–1970s requires a description of the legal basis for ensuring the rights and freedoms of a person, a nation in the world and the Ukrainian SSR in particular. Among a large number of published documents in this context, one should single out documents of an international regulatory nature, namely, declarations, conventions, and pacts that promote the democratic principles of the development of each nation and were ratified by the relevant bodies in Soviet Ukraine.

For example, it is necessary to mention the UN Statute (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2008), some provisions of which were written in collaboration with Ukrainians – first of all, those concerning general respect and observance of human rights regardless of race, nationality, sex, and religion. It is also worth emphasizing several conventions, in particular the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) (United Nations General Assembly, 1948; Mikhalchuk, 1963, p. 417), which was ratified by the President of the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian SSR in 1954, and on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) (United Nations General Assembly, 2006), ratified by the President of the VR of the USSR in 1969.

Another important document is the General Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, 1998; Publishing House of Political Literature of Ukrainian SSR, 1963), which defined and enshrined the basic rights of man, citizen, people, and nation. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Ukrainian Legal Foundation, 1995, p. 16) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Organization of the United Nations,

1994) are of great scientific value, the latter of which has indicated the state's duty to ensure the freedom of the individual it needs for research and creative activity, recognized the benefits of international contacts and cooperation in scientific and cultural spheres. Among the legal documents is the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2002), which provided free national development in the field of education for countries.

In general, the international regulatory and legal framework was based on the principles of equality of rights of large and small nations, equality of nations, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, it spoke for the free development of human rights in the socio-cultural life of the country, condemned any manifestations of national discrimination. Thus, the legal force of the above documents opened the free path for Ukrainians to implement the provisions mentioned in them. However, despite the ratification of these documents by the governments of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and the Ukrainian SSR, the Soviet authorities failed to approve the right of Ukrainians to their national self-assertion, which gave rise to the Ukrainian protests against the anti-national policy of the Communist Party.

It is worth drawing the substantive and semantic content of the term "titular nation" both in the theoretical and practical sense for Soviet Ukraine. This concept is interpreted as a part of the population of the state (state or quasi-state formation), whose nationality is determined by the official name of this state (in the scientific circulation one can also find the term "titular ethnos", see: Antonyuk, Volobuev, & Holovaty, 2005). At the same time, the emphasis is placed on the fact that for the USSR the concept of "title" can be applied to the nation, which gave the name to a certain Republic of the Soviet state. Accordingly, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic got its name from the dominant ethnicity in the Republic – Ukrainian. However, during the Soviet period, Ukrainians could be referred to as the titular nation of the USSR only on the formal basis – the nationality of the majority of the population and the name of quasi-state formation – of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Soviet nation of Ukraine did not have full-fledged Ukrainian content. The Russian-speaking and Russian-cultural beginning was dominant in the Ukrainian national space.

The assimilation policy of the Communist Party leadership leveled and destroyed the natural rights of the Ukrainian nation to dispose of their lives on their land. Systemic Russification in the Ukrainian SSR has purposefully destroyed the national identity of Ukrainians. The Ukrainian people as potential state-workers and bearers of their ethnic features, in particular, language, culture, traditions, and way of life, had to disappear. The Russian leadership was well aware that in the absence of the

legitimate owner of the state, it could claim its role. The Communist ruling elite did everything to ensure that Ukrainians did not enter their legal status as a state-forming titular nation. This state of affairs did not allow the Ukrainian people to take advantage of its quantitative advantage in the formation of republican state bodies and institutions of state administration, which would organize national security, and free national development for Ukrainians.

Soviet Ukraine, which was officially considered a state, was not such. Its statehood was purely formal. The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was part of a single, unitary state – the USSR. The Ukrainian SSR was a marionette quasi-state, a state-like pseudo-formation formed in an illegal state-forming way. Soviet Ukraine did not have its state borders, armed forces, and monetary units. The anthem, coat of arms, and the flag of the Ukrainian SSR were not attributes of statehood but acted only as masking of the actual colonial status of Ukraine as a part of the USSR. Soviet Ukraine did not act as a full-fledged subject of international law and could not carry out independent foreign policy. The ruling Communist Party of Ukraine in the Ukrainian SSR did not take any independent decisions. It was, so to speak, a “subsidiary” structure of the CPSU, its regional organization, and fully subordinated to the latter. The same applies to the government of the Ukrainian SSR, which was a “decorative body” that created the illusion of “labor power”. The Communist governments in the Ukrainian SSR were completely dependent on Moscow and in their activity were guided exclusively by the instructions of the CPSU. It is worth noting that the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR did not express the national composition of Ukrainians, but was a “tracing paper” of the All-Union Russian-centric Constitution of the USSR. In the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian SSR was deprived of the right to national sovereignty, embodied in the form of state sovereignty. Thus, the state space of the Ukrainian nation was taken over by imperial and pseudo-Ukrainian quasi-state governments and institutions.

However, Ukrainians understood themselves as the only people who, naturally and under all international covenants, had the right to self-sufficient existence. The representatives of Ukrainian ethnic, who made up the majority in the Ukrainian SSR, during 1960s and 1970s demonstrated their national maturity through culture, which laid the foundation for further struggle for the political independence of Ukraine.

The author supports the view that the titular nation is the dominant, most important group – that is, the “national majority”, which is the leading entity of the state creation. Its language and culture are the basis for any state. The latter, for its part, is synonymous with the titular nation and must take care of its comprehensive

development in its policy. In this context, we are talking about the national state (Langewiesche, 2008; Kresina & Yavir, 2011).

According to the place occupied by the nation in the state, the author, proceeding from the division established in scientific discourse (Onatsky, 1962; Bochkovsky, 1992; Kasyanov, 1999; Shporlyuk, 2000; Lisovyi, 2002; Gellner, 2003; Smith, 2009; Eutukh, 2011), allocates other types of nations: first, the “state nation” is a nation that has its own national, mostly mono-ethnic state; second, the “non-state nation” is a nation that does not have its national state or has lost it in the past and is a national minority in another national state; third, the “imperial nation” is a dominant nation, which will ignore other nations or national minorities under it. The last type of nation performs imperial expansion, violent assimilation, ethnic cleansing, deportation, and other radical methods at the level of chauvinism and feelings of own superiority. The Russian nation is the imperial nation, which in the process of state policy of the USSR, acted as a subject of assimilation of other nations, particularly Ukrainian ones, including through the socio-cultural space.

The rule or dominance of one ethnic community in the state is interpreted as an ethnocracy. In the scientific world, several interpretations of this term are common. Firstly, as the domination of the elite of a certain ethnic group (nation) over other peoples, and secondly, as a form of political power under which economic, political, social, cultural and spiritual processes are managed based on the monopoly of the ethnic (national) interests of the dominant ethnic group as opposed to the interests of other nations and peoples, etc. According to the researcher S. Boyko, ethnocracy pursues ambitious political goals, which boil down to the fact that “their nation” is dominant over other peoples, which in turn generates national crises and leads to the emergence of inter-ethnic conflicts (Boyko, 2007, p. 117). The outlined trends were followed in the Ukrainian SSR during the 1960s and 1970s. As a result of conducting Russian-centric ethnopolitics, the issue of basic survival and the preservation of the Ukrainian nation became particularly acute.

In theoretical approaches to the study of Ukrainians of the Ukrainian SSR, the central place is occupied by the definition of “indigenous people”, which, based on a statement established in scientific circulation, is interpreted as people living in a multi-ethnic society of a certain country and being the descendants of those who inhabited this country from time immemorial or in the period of its conquest or colonization, or during the establishment of existing state borders. The author equates the concepts of “titular nation” and “indigenous people” in the Ukrainian SSR primarily with Ukrainians who were united by a single language, faith, spirituality, national traditions, customs, centuries-old culture, ethnic origin and ancient residence on the territory of Ukraine, the official name of which was determined by

their nationality. Consequently, the Ukrainian nation is characterized by a certain set of national features that unite it and distinguish it from other nations.

Speaking about Ukrainian ethnos, it is worth emphasizing the concept of “Ukrainian ethnic territory” as the main feature of the territorial organization of the Ukrainian ethnic community. The author supports the scientific point of view, according to which “Ukrainian ethnic territory”, or “Ukrainian ethnic land”, is interpreted as a space, compactly inhabited and mastered by Ukrainians for many centuries (Romantsov, 2005; Chirkov, 2006). That is, the ethnic territory of Ukrainians, in our opinion, should be considered the settlement area of the Ukrainian ethnic massif as the main feature of the territorial organization of the Ukrainian ethnic community. At the same time, based on scientifically established statements, the Ukrainian ethnic territory should be divided into “solid” – in the national structure of the population, which is dominated by Ukrainians, and “mixed” – in the national structure, in which the number of representatives of the Ukrainian ethnic group reaches half of the total number of all those who inhabit it.

The majority of the Ukrainian ethnic territory of 1960s–1970s had a distinctly mono-ethnic Ukrainian character, however, along with the Ukrainian ethnic group, many other ethnic groups did not identify themselves with Ukrainians. According to the definition of representatives of non-Ukrainian ethnic groups, the term “national minority” should be used. It should be emphasized that in some cases, ethnic minorities become the subject of assimilation of the indigenous ethnic group. For example, during the 1960s and 1970s, Russians as a national minority became the basis of the assimilation processes of the titular nation of the Ukrainian SSR, as evidenced by the policy of Russification, which was based on the encroachment of the Russian nation on the linguistic and cultural identity of Ukrainians.

In studies on ethnic problems, the concept of “assimilation” is interpreted as the process of the gradual dissolution of an independent ethnic group or its part among a larger ethnic group or group of ethnic groups (Yas, 2003). The assimilated ethnic group loses its characteristic features, primarily language, traditional culture, spirituality, and ethnic self-awareness, and adopts ethnic stereotypes of another ethnic group. Assimilation can occur through the voluntary gradual assimilation of ethnocultural traditions of one group by another. However, forced assimilation is also distinguished, which ignores ethnic systems, creates all kinds of obstacles to the normal functioning of other ethnic groups, and causes devastating political and spiritual destruction to the peoples that have come under its harmful influence.

The last type of assimilation is essentially similar to the process of de-ethnicization – the dispersal of the ethnic group, the destruction of its ethnic characteristics, and, as a result, its complete subordination to the dominant nation. De-ethnicization

usually begins with the loss of one's native language, faith, national memory, and further – ethnic identification. All this, in the end, can ultimately lead to a complete transformation of ethnic self-consciousness up to its absolute extinction. Such a consistent and total assimilation was carried out by the Soviet authorities in relation to Ukrainians. The territories of the Ukrainian SSR were inhabited by non-ethnic “elements”, mainly of Russian nationality, which led to radical, artificial change in the composition of the indigenous population. The process of denationalization of the titular ethnos was carried out quite intensively and was expressed in the mass absorption of Ukrainian national culture by Russia, silencing the national mentality of Ukrainians. Assimilation processes in the Ukrainian SSR were aimed at eliminating the national characteristics of Ukrainians and instilling in them the ethnic characteristics of the “great” Russian people. Such a course of events was inhumane.

In addition to the internal processes of assimilation of Ukrainians, the transformation of the ethnic structure of the Ukrainian SSR was also influenced by external migration processes, which gained significant intensity during the Soviet period of Ukraine's history. Separated from mainland Ukraine, Ukrainians formed the Ukrainian diaspora, which is characterized as an established group of people of the same ethnic origin living in a non-ethnic environment outside the historical Motherland.

The Ukrainian diaspora was one of the largest diasporas in the world, whose representatives lived in many countries on the territory of several world continents. Therefore, outside the area of settlement of its people, for the preservation, reproduction, functioning, and development of its community, it always formed many social, cultural, and educational centers. At the same time, Ukrainian emigrants sought to preserve their ethnic identity and maintain close ties with Ukraine. The interrelationships of the diaspora and Ukrainians of mainland Ukraine can be traced to the 1960s and 1970s during the period of active manifestation of the desire of the titular nation of the Ukrainian SSR to preserve and demonstrate national “I” to the world.

Ukrainians who led the struggle for their national distinction in the scientific world were called dissidents. It was they who personified the “democratic type of personality” that valued the human right to freedom and reacted sharply to the attempts of the totalitarian machine of the Soviet state to limit it (Kaganov, 2019).

Speaking about the oppositional moods in the Ukrainian ethnic environment at that time, it is advisable to find out their definitions, which in the scientific literature fall under the concepts of “nonconformism”, “counterculture”, “alternative culture”, “shadow culture”, “sixties”, “dissident”, etc. The concept of “nonconformism” is defined in the scientific terms of political science (as a manifestation of social

behavior in the form of political protest), psychology (as a behavior that consists in a critical attitude to the norms, values, goals prevailing in a specific group in society), philosophy (when it comes to existentialism, which is based on a person's free choice of their destiny), cultural studies and other sciences (Vysheslavskiy & Sydor-Ghibelinda, 2010; Gornostay, 2011). The varieties of this phenomenon in the field of culture include literary and artistic nonconformism, which can be considered through the prism of “counterculture”, which is based on opposition to the fundamental principles of officially recognized culture (Volkov, 2001; Zhbankov, 2001; Kovaliv, 2007). In this context, “counterculture” converges with the concept of “alternative culture”.

In domestic historical science, the term “nonconformism” is considered to denote the activity of the intelligentsia of a new generation of Ukrainian artists who, in the early 1960s, brought the spirit of rebellion and denial of official, established dogmas to Soviet culture. In several studies on the mentioned issues, the definition of “shadow culture” is found, which involves promoting unauthorized works, producing silenced plays, advocating alternative judgments, etc. (Andrushchenko, Guberskiy, & Mikhalchenko, 2002, p. 36). Also, it is possible to talk about nonconformism and disagreement with the generally accepted form of artistic thinking (Medvid, 2002, p. 135).

It is worth noting that the nonconformist phenomenon in the Ukrainian SSR was also the “sixties”, which was represented by strata of Ukrainian nationally conscious intelligentsia, which appeared in the cultural space of the Ukrainian SSR in the second half of the 1950s – during the time of de-Stalinization and a certain liberalization – and manifested itself most creatively at the beginning of the next decade and in the mid-1960s (Bazhan, 2013). For the first half of the 60s of the 20th century, it is quite appropriate to use the term “nonconformism” in parallel with the use of term “sixties”. However, to characterize the subsequent course of events in the Ukrainian ethnic environment, the concept of “nonconformism” decreases its significance.

Since the second half of the 1960s, given the mass persecution and repression of Ukrainian human rights defenders, the oppression of the national cultural and spiritual life of Ukrainians, and the violation of constitutional rights and human freedoms by the ruling communist leadership, dissident circles have resorted to more active forms of protest against the then government. In the outlined period, the formation of Ukrainian dissidence took place, the characteristic feature of which was the struggle for the national interests of the Ukrainian people, which combined the most diverse forms of civil protest – from intellectual resistance to the creation of organizational structures for the overthrow of the existing Soviet state system

(Kovaliv, 2007). A dissident can be characterized as a political dissident, a member of the opposition movement. Given the above, the relationship between the concepts of “nonconformism” and “dissident” is inappropriate. Thus, W. Parchomenko believes that the specified concepts are completely incomparable, since nonconformists are characterized by a more passive retreat from official standards of behavior, while dissidents are characterized by more active resistance to the ruling regime already in the political plane (Parchomenko, 1986).

Conclusions

Thus, the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the proposed research are based on the achievements of many social sciences, including history, ethnology, cultural studies, political science, demography, economics, ethnostate formation, etc. Each of the above concepts is not ideal but has its advantages and disadvantages. However, it is their balanced combination that remains a reference point in the study of the history of the Ukrainian people of the second half of the 20th century, the study of self-assertion of the Ukrainian nation in the defined period. The study of the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the proposed topic made it possible to systematize and generalize the information obtained while avoiding subjective assessments and helped to approach the most objective scientific assessment of the dynamics, trends, and consequences of social and cultural processes in the Ukrainian ethnic environment of the Ukrainian SSR during the 1960s–1970s period, ensuring the scientific reliability of the obtained research results.

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