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Youth political culture fundamentals: historical aspects

The young people, as the driving force of society, perform the integrating functions at every stage of its development, combining and developing the experience of previous generations and contributing to social progress. This is a special group of people who play an important role in the development of mankind. Youth is a mirror reflecting and social reality in which she lives. Youth is definitely a social transformer which provides the impetus for the development and changes in the depth of social life, probably, not catching the eyes of most citizens of the state. It is the bearer of intellectual capacity, special abilities for creativity, unique perspective on life, a particular method of thinking, and most importantly, without fear about what will happen next. Youth is a catalyst of implementation of new ideas, initiatives and new forms of life, as it is an enemy of conservatism and stagnation in society. Youth is an unconventional group of people in society, who is an active bearer of a new political culture of a democratic society.

In our view, it would be feasible to examine the political culture of young people of the late twentieth century and today at least superficially.

Analyzing the 80s' political culture of youth, J.P. Ozhegov and M.M. Blinov defined it as a generalized description of a young man who combines the political education and political awareness with a common culture, an understanding of its civic rights and responsibilities with active practical activity in the political sphere of society. The political culture of young people expresses its political consciousness, political experience, political orientation, political positions, learned examples of political behavior, and a certain level of political activity, which constitutes the identity ideological core [*Политическая культура и молодежь...* 1982: 78].

The understanding of the nature of political culture in the 80's of the twentieth century generated by Soviet scientists as a social phenomenon allows disclosing the content of the category of the "socialist political culture", the detailing of which is applied to a specific socio-demographic group and acts as a of "political culture of the Soviet youth".

"Socialist political culture", according to scientists of the Soviet period, was a high type of political culture. Its predecessor and source is the "political culture of the proletariat", which in the course of the class struggle has developed its own forms and methods of politics, political concepts, and ideology, reflect-

ing its class interests and ensure the implementation of its class needs. However, the “socialist political culture” represents a “political culture of the proletariat”, which obtained the state power, having become thereby not the oppressed but the ruling class. This primarily determines the difference between the two types of political culture, which by their nature belong to the same historical type. While the leading aspect of political culture of the struggling proletariat is the political violence, in “socialist political culture” the conscious function comes to the forefront.

The “socialist political culture” as a reflection of the political relations of socialism, in turn, serves as a means of improving them. It follows that the essence of the “socialist political culture” as opposed to its other types, such as “bourgeois”, consists of an extremely high level of political activity of the broad masses themselves in engaging every person in social and political activities, in the implementation of its interests and needs as a political entity. In this sense, the “socialist political culture” is a measure of establishment and development of high social qualities inherent to the socialist type of personality in every Soviet citizen.

A characteristic feature of the political “socialist culture” also was the fact that by implementing its political nature, the person does not act in opposition to the social and political system of socialism. Proclaiming a comprehensive and harmonious development of each and every one as a supreme goal of historical development, the socialism eliminates the antagonism between individuals and society, in accordance with which the measure of political culture of a personality in terms of the communist formation was not the denial of the existing norms and values, but the “undivided support of the Party policy and the Soviet Union state, as well as an active participation in the struggle for implementation of communist ideals, and the aspiration to follow primarily the common interests serves our great motherland, the cause of communism” [Халипов 1980].

Among the constituents of characteristics of the socialist political culture is the fact that its ideological and organizational basis is formed by the “socialist democracy” [*Политическая культура социализма...* 1984: 170]. Understanding the development of democratic fundamentals in the public life, diminishing the role of the enforcement mechanism and the role of moral regulation, transformation of politics into the tool for managing all social processes is the main pathway of the socialist political culture.

Based on the above research of the Soviet scientists we managed to formulate the following concepts of political culture of the socialist type. It is a measure of implementation of its essential powers in the political relations of the communist social formation, the degree of awarding the wealth of social ties in this area of social life which finds its expression in the depths of the assimilation of the political socialist knowledge, norms and values in the communist belief,

ideological maturity, and active transforming activity related to construction of the communist society.

The definition generated in the Soviet period allowed to formulate the concept of the “political culture of Soviet youth” as follows: “The political culture of Soviet youth” is a measure and a way to implement the essential powers of youth as an active participant of social changes in political relations, the indicators of which is the degree of joining the institutions of the political organization of Soviet society by youth, which finds its expression in the level of social and political activity, in the depths of the communist belief, the degree of mastery of the political knowledge, norms and values.

Thus, it is important to state, based on the nature of the “socialist political culture”, that the core political beliefs with which the personality of the socialist type is endowed, should have included the belief that Marxism-Leninism was the only philosophical and socio-economic theory, most adequately reflecting the laws of nature, society and man; conviction that socialism is the only social ideology which actually provides the social equality and creates the conditions for comprehensive and harmonious development of all and everyone; the belief that all phenomena of social life must be measured from the position of the driving force of social development of the working class and its vanguard of battle, the Communist Party (which is currently non-effective and non-functional, and often acts against the interests of protection of the majority of citizens); the belief that the relationship between individuals, nations, and peoples shall be based on the principles of proletarian internationalism and collectivism; the belief that the supreme duty of every Soviet citizen was to protect its socialist motherland, its freedom and independence, and the cause of the Communist Party; the belief that one of the highest social values is the creative work for the good of the motherland; the belief that participation in social and political activities is a condition of comprehensive and holistic development of the individual; the belief that compliance with both socialist legal norms and moral standards is a necessary condition of life of the individual in terms of the communist social formation.

On the basis of the foregoing material the fundamental social and political attitudes that were characteristic of the Soviet man (“socialist personality”) with high political culture were proved. The major components of the individual with high political culture evolved in the propaganda of the current regime and ideology to praise the leader of the state and the party, and, most importantly, to act only for the good of the state, and not to think about personal enrichment (it was considered bourgeois) because this was unnecessary. If the Soviet people did not follow the above paradigm, it was considered actively non-political, with low “socialist political culture”, and, what’s the most important, it could not succeed in its career development (although it could feature excellent professional qualities, intelligence and talent).

Today, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and exit from the same, Ukraine has passed the way from monolithic to plural political culture, but it is still necessary to form a sense of cultural and historical unity of our people. According to A. Sypko, since independence, Ukraine has significantly updated the structural elements of political culture, values, skills, guidance, methods and techniques of political activity. The society gradually becomes accustomed to political pluralism, diversity of approaches to solving the pressing political issues, and open expression of its attitude to political institutions. The positive instruction on mastering the global experience is becoming the norm, and the sense of Ukraine's inclusion into the global political process is growing. But the old Soviet totalitarian political culture, transformed into a new system of values, is evident in the form of formal, detached attitude to formal political norms, values and institutions [Сипко 2001: 156]. Therefore the Ukrainian political culture is controversial because it combines two opposing value systems, totalitarian and democratic.

The heterogeneity of political culture of youth and the people is also affected by the regional mentality caused by confessional differences, especially the beliefs and religious practices of the Orthodox and Uniates. Thus, the Greek Catholics, who are concentrated mostly in Western Ukraine, gravitate towards the Western Christianity associated with the Roman law and the concept of private property as well as free development of one's private life in its dogma. The Orthodox population of Eastern Ukraine is characterized by collectivist attitude to the life problems, aspirations for a transpersonal goal, mercy, compassion for the needy, condescension to human flaws and so on. The Orthodox is subject to discipline rather under the influence of external circumstances, and the Greek Catholic – under the inner ones. You can talk about a greater willingness of the Greek Catholic Western states, unlike the Orthodox East, to liberalize the society, privatize the economy and introduce the market competition. All these factors ultimately, according to V. Sychova, affect the evolution of political culture in Ukraine [Сичова 2001: 73–74], and in particular young people.

Thus the political culture of youth is a dynamic phenomenon formed under the influence of economic, social, governmental and religious processes in a given state. In turn, the level of political culture of young people determines the impact on different spheres of social development.

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Abstract

The author of the article made an attempt to analyze the political culture of Soviet youth of the late twentieth century and associate the same with the phenomenon of the political culture of modern Ukrainian youth.

Key words: youth political culture, young people, socialist political culture, pluralism.