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**ETHNOPOLITICAL STABILITY IN UKRAINE:
CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF OVERCOMING
THEM (EXAMPLE OF CHERNIVTSI OBLAST, UKRAINE)**

Introduction: articulation and urgency of the problem

The ethno-national pattern of the state is always an important factor in its domestic political stability and attractive international image. “A country is not just a territory... A country is an idea that rises on this foundation; it is a feeling of love, a feeling of brotherhood that unites all the sons of this territory”, wrote the Italian politician and patriot Giuseppe Madzini in the 19th century¹. As an independent state, Ukraine emerged in 1991, but only in 2013–2014, during the turbulent and fateful events of the latest Maidan and the Revolution of Dignity, Ukrainian society for the first time felt a sense of unity and solidarity that united all those who decided to defend their right to vote and the right to the future.

Historically, under conditions of constant and strong pressure from neighbors, it was quite difficult for Ukrainians to win their own statehood. From ancient times to modern times, the idea of a sovereign Ukraine has not been implemented, despite the fact that the first democratic constitution in world practice was developed and approved by the Ukrainians in 1710. In 1991, the worst seemed to be over. The times of territorial encroachments by neighbors, political persecution, repression, and foreign domination have become a history, and its lessons need to be learned. However, almost three decades after the declaration of

¹ Дж. Мадзіні, *Обов'язки перед країною* [w:] *Націоналізм: антологія*, упорядники О. Проценко, В. Лісовий, Смолоскип, Київ 2000, с. 61.

independence, Ukraine was once again forced to defend its right to sovereignty. Once again, we were faced with the question: Who are we? Where are we going? What do we want? Questions to which Ukrainian society still does not have an unambiguous answer and on the solution of which the present and future of many generations of Ukrainians depend.

During the Revolution of Dignity 2013–2014, slogans appeared in which, for the first time in the recent history of Ukraine, the desire for a common national identity, Ukrainian nationality, was voiced, not so much in the ethnic as in the political context: “Ukrainians are a European nation”, “We are one”, “We are citizens”, “We are a nation”. However, despite the desire to unite around common democratic values, we see ethnic and state opposition as a desire for mental separation from the northern neighbor: “Unite, Ukrainians, but not with the Muscovites!”, “Who does not jump is the Muscovite” and others. It may be said that the process of forming a political Ukrainian nation has started, but it is still far from over. In addition, the implementation of Ukraine’s course of European integration in the context of military activities in the East has become a kind of litmus test, which revealed all the painful points of our existence. Therefore, one cannot but agree with the words of the above-mentioned G. Madzini: “Before joining the Nations that make up Humanity, we must exist as a Nation. There can be no union except among equals...”². After all, before joining the commonwealth of nations or peoples, it is necessary to realize one’s separateness not only as an ethnic community, but also as a state with clearly defined principles of domestic and foreign policy.

Despite the fact that more than five years have passed since the revolutionary events and the election of the first post-revolutionary president Petro Poroshenko, nation-building processes in Ukraine continue. The formation of the political Ukrainian nation (common collective existence, according to G. Madzini) takes place in extremely difficult conditions, but without this neither a democratic state nor European integration will take place. Still, the biggest danger is the lack of constructive dialogue between society and officials who represent state power. As a result, we see a kind of split: some believe that the country should be protected, even at the cost of their own lives; others are convinced that it makes no sense to die for the oligarchs; some continue to live as if nothing had happened, others try to use the situation to their advantage, both financially and politically. This state of affairs cannot but cause concern, as the future of Ukraine, its sovereignty and prospects for further development depend on the ability of the government and society to respond quickly and adequately to today’s challenges. The urgency of scientific intelligence is due to the need to identify potential threats to the ethno-political stability of Ukraine, in particular in its border areas.

² *Ibidem*, c. 59.

Scientific novelty of the research

Many scientific works of Western scholars (B. Anderson, E. Gellner, W. Kersting W. Kymlicka, A. Smith, C. Taylor, etc.) are devoted to the study of ethno-national policy. Of great scientific interest are explorations authored by Polish scientists G. Babiński, W. Baluk, D. Kowalewska, R. Lasecki, J. Mucha, A. Sadowski, M. Śniadecka-Kotarska, A. Wierzbicki, D. Wojakowski and others. However, the list of works that study the ethno-national situation and its main components in the Chernivtsi Oblast (Ukraine) at the present stage of development of Ukrainian statehood is not so significant. In particular, A. Kruhlashov, V. Burdyak, I. Burkut, S. Gakman, N. Nechaeva-Yuriychuk, N. Rotar, V. Fisanov and other researchers propose the solution of certain issues of Ukrainian regional ethnopolitics. However, it should be noted that currently there are almost no works that consider the trends of regional policy after the Revolution of Dignity, or study the recent effects of countries bordering Ukraine on ethno-national stability in Chernivtsi Oblast³. This, of course, actualizes the issues raised in this scientific intelligence and raises the level of scientific novelty of the study.

The main task of the research

In this context, according to the author, the ethno-political factor is important, which in the context of politicization of ethnicities and external aggression is beginning to play a key role in domestic political processes in Ukraine. The purpose of this intelligence is to clarify the challenges of ethno-political stability in Ukraine on the example of one of the polyethnic regions of our country – Chernivtsi Oblast. To achieve this goal, the author identified the following tasks: to analyze the challenges to national security in Ukraine as a whole, to identify the main threats to the ethnopolitics in Chernivtsi Oblast, to suggest possible mechanisms to overcome (or reduce) risks of escalating ethno-political situation in the region.

Explanation of the solution of the problem

Implementation of reforms, preparation and holding of various elections at the local and national levels in the conditions of undeclared hybrid war cannot but influence ethno-national and nation-building processes. Today we are not only

³ А. Круглашов, Н. Нечаєва-Юрійчук, *Зовнішні та внутрішні чинники (де) стабілізації міжетнічних взаємин у Чернівецькій області*, „Стратегічні пріоритети” 2019, вип. 1, с. 65–72.

witnessing changes in all spheres of life, from political to economic, but also direct participants in these changes. At the same time, it is worth remembering that the “collective mind” is waking up in Ukrainians in times of crisis. Thus, the two Maidans, in 2004 and 2013, were conditioned by the relevant political decisions of the top and became a challenge to the system, to Ukrainians, and a victory over themselves. The victory that became the foundation of the following changes – difficult, but necessary for further joint, “collective existence”.

At the same time, it should be noted that the confrontation on the Maidan in 2004 and in 2013–2014 had its negative consequences. In particular, psychological: unfortunately, almost immediately after the partial achievement of the set goals (change of president, for example), the “collective mind” of Ukrainians recedes into the background, together with a sense of solidarity, without which, in our opinion, it is impossible to build a truly democratic and strong Ukraine. As Euromaidan activist Victoria Narizhna noted, “With the beginning of the Maidan, we stopped doing everything that made us. The daily schedules of thousands and thousands of people have become so similar that Orwell never dreamed.

The danger I began to feel in recent weeks was the danger of finally dissolving in the collective body. Not to remember what it is like to be oneself, a separate, autonomous unit, not connected to thousands of others in any collective impulse”⁴. Obviously, it is impossible to live all one’s life on the Maidan, but we should maintain the feelings of solidarity and unity that are the driving force of democratic transformations in our state even after the Maidan. In fact, as a result of several months of confrontation on the Maidan, for the first time we came to a joint conclusion about the importance of human and civil rights, our own role in the country’s social and political life, and the need to radically change our approach to collective and individual life. But since history has not given Ukrainians time for euphoria, today we continue the discussion (about the private and collective, the role of the state as a political institution and regulator and the role of the individual citizen in the state), in difficult conditions, often at the cost of our citizens.

The turn of events in modern Ukraine once again confirms that we cannot consider the situation in Chernivtsi Oblast outside the context of all-Ukrainian events. In recent months, the world community in general and Ukraine in particular have faced a completely new challenge that threatens all spheres of life, from the political system of the state to the provision of social services. At the same time, the focus stays on saving the lives and health of citizens. This is the Covid-19 pandemic, which since the beginning of 2020 has spread to almost the whole

⁴ В. Наріжна, *Досвід буття в колективному тілі*, URL: <http://artvertep.com/print?cont=24796> [dostep: 11.04.2020].

world and forced the governments of various countries, including EU member states, to take unprecedented steps to ensure the most effective protection of their citizens in these difficult conditions. The effectiveness of the policies of each country and the WHO can be discussed only after the end of the pandemic, but Ukraine fully feels the impact of Covid-19 on the organization of domestic political life, in particular, the implementation of quarantine measures and more.

It is obvious that the pandemic has a negative impact on the development of the economy of all states and the world community as a whole. Observers and experts are already paying attention to this fact. In the context of the researched problems, we consider it necessary to pay attention to two challenges that are already more than relevant not only for Ukraine (and Chernivtsi Oblast in particular), but also for the world community. First of all, it is worth noting the intensification of the so-called debates on the effectiveness of authoritarian regimes in the fight against coronavirus (often referred to as China) and the ineffectiveness of democracies (examples are given in Italy in the first place, as well as Spain), which has a destructive effect on the mental state and objective perception of reality, especially in post-authoritarian societies, which easily return to the idea of establishing a more “rigid government” that “can ensure order.” According to the author, it is not accidental that messages are sent through various messengers, which emphasize the effectiveness of the use of force (video with Indian police), the unpreparedness of the Italian medical system for an outbreak of a viral disease, and so on. Therefore, in our opinion, this topic will need special analysis, including in the context of ethno-political challenges to political stability and security, given the tendency to intensify the creation of political and ethnic myths and stereotypes by certain circles and, in our opinion, paid-for bot farms.

In the context of the spread of the pandemic in Ukraine, the announcement of quarantine measures, focusing public attention on health issues, the challenges associated with the international activity of our state in the context of resolving the conflict or ending war on our eastern borders are often invisible to Ukrainian society. Military actions in the East of our country, which radically affect all spheres of society, from military to social, cultural, ethnopolitical, etc., remain the most significant and urgent challenges to Ukraine’s state sovereignty and its position in the international arena.

Obviously, one of the most important tasks facing public authorities is to strengthen the country’s defense capabilities, which, in our opinion, is impossible without the transformation of the Ukrainian army into a professional and refusal of conscription, as well as, most likely, the involvement of international peacekeeping forces to resolve the conflict in Donbass. The latter raises a number of discussions and questions, but is a possible scenario that one needs to be prepared for. In addition, although the pandemic has changed the timing of spring

conscription in Ukraine, the problem of creating a professional army remains not only unresolved, but not even made relevant in Ukraine. Moreover, the steps taken by the Ukrainian authorities to reach a compromise with Russia in the spring of this year, in particular, the idea of establishing an advisory council with ORDLO (isolated districts of the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts) were criticized by deputies of the “Greens” party in the Bundestag, who believe that this step will destroy the Minsk agreements⁵.

The next challenge we would like to address is the socio-economic situation in the country, which is rapidly deteriorating with the announcement of quarantine measures, intensifies antagonistic sentiments in Ukrainian society, prevents positive political progress, deprives many citizens of hope for future prospects in their own country. Thus, according to a survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in cooperation with the Charitable Foundation “Intellectual Perspective” from June 26 to July 18, 2015, on a quota sample representing the adult population (18 years and more) in all regions of Ukraine (except Crimea and the occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts), rising prices (75%), unemployment (70.7%), and non-payment of salaries and pensions (68%) are among the biggest fears of Ukrainians⁶.

All of the above results in the search for a better life outside of Ukraine, an increase in the number of people wishing to obtain foreign passports (as well as passports of other countries contrary to Ukrainian law) for further travel abroad to work and, in the future, to stay there permanently. The latter affects the process of political self-identification of Ukrainian citizens, and later national identification, because processes of ethnic acculturation and assimilation often accompany a long stay outside the homeland (and the acquisition of citizenship of another country).

It is necessary to pay attention to the fact that a significant part of those who volunteered for the front or did not avoid mobilization and perform their patriotic duty on the eastern borders, are those who are willing to sacrifice their lives to achieve certain goals, change the world, etc. or, as the famous scientist Lev Gumilev noted in his works, super activists. Therefore, among the challenges facing modern Ukraine is the loss of active citizens, ready for radical change, during the war and because of emigration. Therefore, it is extremely important today for both the Ukrainian government and for society as a whole to carry out successful

⁵ У Бундестазі розкритикували створення консультативної ради з ОРДЛО, URL: <https://gordonua.com/ukr/news/war/-u-bundestazi-rozkritikuvali-stvorennja-konsultativnoji-radi-z-ordlo-1491464.html> [dostep: 11.04.2020].

⁶ До Дня незалежності: що українці думають про Україну?, URL: http://www.dif.org.ua/ua/polls/2015a/do-dnja-nezalezhnosti-sho-ukrainci-dumayut-pro-ukrainu__1440150573.htm [dostep: 11.04.2020].

economic reforms and change the economic situation in Ukraine, radical social, legal and economic reforms, overcoming corruption and the “gray zone” for the rise and prosperity of the Ukrainian state and society.

In fact, war and economic destabilization, in our opinion, are of the biggest challenges, including ethno-political stability in Ukraine in general and Chernivtsi Oblast in particular. After all, economic instability is one of the biggest provokers of aggravation of relations between representatives of different ethnic groups and nations, who are beginning to see a threat to their existence in the presence of other ethnic groups. To some extent, this is what the external enemy is counting on – the Russian Federation, which is trying to provoke interethnic contradictions and civil confrontation in our country so that its own aggression can be disguised as “peacekeeping”, “pacification by force”, “civil confrontation”, etc.

Historically, Ukraine appeared on the political borders of the world only in the second half of the twentieth century. Until now, Ukrainian lands were part of other states, which could not but affect the processes of self-identification of the local population. Therefore, the current situation in our country is due to a number of reasons, including different, sometimes antagonistic, political and ideological self-identification of Ukrainians. The clash of these identities was the impetus for the disruption of civil peace and the challenge of ethno-political stability, including in our region.

According to the results of a poll conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the Ukrainian Sociology Service from December 25, 2014 to January 15, 2015, as well as from August 16 to 28, 2018⁷, “Ukrainian identification predominates in all regions over Russian (except Donbas), but the presence of two identifications in all regions of Ukraine (except Galicia), especially in the south-eastern regions (which include Chernivtsi and Zakarpattia Oblasts), creates significant difficulties in conducting cultural and information policy in the context of the military confrontation with Russia”. Our study allows us to state that among the determining external factors influencing the ethnopolitical stability of the Chernivtsi Oblast, it is the Romanian and Russian factors that are the most difficult, so they need priority attention. But in modern conditions, first of all, the Russian factor of influence is the most dangerous, because this influence is carried out both through the massive propaganda and information war against Ukraine (and in the region under study, inclusive) and through agents of influence, where certain structures of Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine play an important role, uniting not only its supporters but also adher-

⁷ *Європейська інтеграція у вимірі громадської думки*, URL: <https://dif.org.ua/article/evropeyska-integratsiya-u-vimiri-gromadskoi-dumki> [dostep: 11.04.2020]; *Що об'єднує та роз'єднує українців – опитування громадської думки в Україні*, URL: <http://www.dif.org.ua/ua/polls/2015a/sho-obednue-ta-rozednue-.htm> [dostep: 11.04.2020].

ents of the concept of “Russian world”. Researchers should pay attention to the activities of the ROC in Ukraine in the context of the pandemic, which continues to affect the radicalization of sentiment in Ukrainian society and the consequences of which, according to the author, Ukraine will feel in the near future.

For a deeper understanding of the situation, we consider it necessary to clarify: for 33.4% of the population of Bukovyna and Transcarpathia, the Russian state is largely close, and for 13.7% – very close, which together gives more than 47%⁸. However, in these regions there was no question of attitude to the Romanian, Hungarian language and culture, as well as states themselves. Therefore, the issue of double or triple identity in our region remains open.

In our opinion, the fact that only 37.8% of respondents in the South-Western region (which, as mentioned above, include Chernivtsi Oblast and Transcarpathia) consider themselves primarily citizens of Ukraine, in contrast to, for example, Kyiv, where 79.9% of respondents identified themselves as such⁹. Moreover, there are currently two regions in Ukraine with exactly the same percentage of citizens who consider themselves primarily citizens of Ukraine – the South-Western region and Donbas, which can not but cause concern. In addition, among Bukovynians and Transcarpathians there are 1.5% of respondents who consider themselves citizens of the USSR (while the USSR collapsed almost thirty years ago), 2.5% – citizens of Europe and 6.3% – citizens of the world, not to mention identifying oneself with a hometown, region and Ukraine.

Conclusions

Thus, ensuring ethno-political stability in Chernivtsi Oblast depends on a number of factors, primarily national and global. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the surface a number of issues on which the future of the democratic world in general and democratic Ukraine in particular depends. The actualization of social and economic problems, the spiritual challenges of today, imposed on the mass return of migrant workers, gives the Ukrainian authorities tasks that must be addressed immediately.

In these circumstances, in our opinion, it is extremely important to initiate and organize a census of the population of Ukraine, as at present there is no reliable information about its number and, in particular, ethnic composition. The return of migrant workers suggests that the results of the census will be more reliable and in line with the real situation.

⁸ *Що об'єднує та роз'єднує українців – опитування громадської думки в Україні...*

⁹ *Ibidem.*

The next thing that is vital in view of the events taking place in Ukraine is the establishment of an open and transparent dialogue between local executive bodies, local self-government bodies and the community. Every citizen of Ukraine, regardless of their ethnic origin, must be heard, must receive answers to their questions and demands, must feel that the government is defending their interests.

It is also necessary to intensify actions both on the part of the authorities and on the part of public organizations to establish a horizontal dialogue between ethnic communities. Today, more than two dozen national and cultural societies are active in the region, which organize various events to support their own language, culture, preservation and development of folk customs and more. The problems we face today require the joint efforts of all citizens of Ukraine, so we need to interact and cooperate not only during folklore and ethnographic festivals such as “Bukovynian Meetings”, but also when solving any tasks relevant to the city and region: whether to open an exhibition, or to hold a round table, conference, public hearings, etc. Bridges of mutual understanding can be built and the situation in the state stabilized only through dialogue.

It would also be worthwhile to organize a public discussion of the problem of dual citizenship with recommendations for its solution, as some Bukovynians have two passports, and historical experience shows that the omission of the problem only aggravates it. The issue of dual citizenship has become particularly relevant in the context of the annexation of Crimea and Russia's destabilization of the situation in eastern Ukraine through large-scale support for quasi-entities as so-called ORDLO (isolated districts of the Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts), including with the help of Russian “passport system” for the population of territories not controlled by Ukraine in the east of the state. Therefore, its solution must be started immediately to prevent negative consequences in the future.

In fact, the young Ukrainian state today faces the question: *quo vadis?* And it is only from the middle of the second decade of the 21st century that there is an understanding of where and how our country should move.

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STABILNOŚĆ ETNOPOLITYCZNA NA UKRAINIE: WYZWANIA I PERSPEKTYWY ICH PRZEZWYCIĘŻENIA (PRZYKŁAD OBWODU CZERNIOWIECKIEGO, UKRAINA)

Streszczenie

Pilny charakter wywiadu naukowego wynika z potrzeby określenia potencjalnych zagrożeń dla stabilności etnopolitycznej Ukrainy, w szczególności w jej obszarach przygranicznych. Celem tego wywiadu jest wyjaśnienie wyzwań związanych ze stabilnością etnopolityczną Ukrainy na przykładzie jednego z regionów wieloetnicznych naszego kraju – obwodu czerniowieckiego. Wzorec etniczno-narodowy państwa jest zawsze ważnym czynnikiem jego wewnętrznej stabilności politycznej i atrakcyjnego wizerunku międzynarodowego. Kształtowanie się politycznego narodu ukraińskiego odbywa się w niezwykle trudnych warunkach, ale bez tego nie będzie miało miejsca ani demokratyczne państwo, ani integracja europejska. Przebieg wydarzeń na współczesnej Ukrainie po raz kolejny potwierdza, że nie możemy rozpatrywać sytuacji w obwodzie czerniowieckim poza kontekstem wydarzeń ogólnoukraińskich. Wojna i destabilizacja gospodarcza stanowią największe wyzwania, w tym stabilność etniczno-polityczna na Ukrainie w ogóle, a w obwodzie czerniowieckim w szczególności.

Słowa kluczowe: etnopolityka, Ukraina, obwód czerniowiecki, demokracja, integracja europejska, stabilność społeczna

ETHNOPOLITICAL STABILITY IN UKRAINE: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF OVERCOMING THEM (EXAMPLE OF CHERNIVTSI OBLAST, UKRAINE)

Abstract

The urgency of scientific intelligence is due to the need to identify potential threats to the ethno-political stability of Ukraine, in particular in its border areas. The purpose of this intelligence is to clarify the challenges of ethno-political stability in Ukraine on the example of one of the polyethnic regions of our country – Chernivtsi Oblast. The ethno-national pattern of the state is always an important factor in its domestic political stability and attractive international image. The formation of the political Ukrainian nation takes place in extremely difficult conditions, but without this neither a democratic state nor European integration will take place. The turn of events in modern Ukraine once again confirms that we cannot consider the situation in Chernivtsi Oblast outside the context of all-Ukrainian events. War and economic destabilization are of the biggest challenges, including ethno-political stability in Ukraine in general and Chernivtsi Oblast in particular.

Keywords: ethnopolitics, Ukraine, Chernivtsi region, democracy, European integration, social stability