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METHODS OF COUNTERING THE SPREAD OF RADICAL IDEAS IN RUSSIA: CURRENT PERSPECTIVE

Radicalism is a real threat to the multi-ethnic people of the Russian Federation. Radical ideas sometimes enjoy certain popularity and are presented in the programs of political parties and movements in Russia. The authors consider methods for counteracting the spread of radical ideas. They consider the socio-cultural and educational methods that have a direct impact on the population and introduce the ideas of tolerance towards others as effective. They are not intrusive and operate in conditions of the today political processes. The authors cover the gap existing in that area of Russian political science.

Key words: *radicalism, socio-cultural method, educational method, idea, Russia, Constitution, mass media, cinema.*

Radicalism in the Russian context exists to a greater extent as a reflection of historical reality and of the researchers' contradictory positions as far as the course of the Russian development is concerned. It is an object of topical research for Russian political scientists [1; 11; 4. P. 522-530].

At the moment, there are a number of methods to combat the spread and development of radical ideas. We can distinguish the following methods that help to prevent the development of radical ideas:

- the legislative method;
- sociocultural method; and
- educational method [3. P. 80-87].

We believe that the above model needs a revision in the light of the political events of the last three years in the Russian Federation.

The legislative method involves a prohibitive policy: it concerns radical nationalism and extremist ideas in general. It is aimed at prohibiting the use of corresponding symbols and waging of relevant propaganda.

Sociocultural method involves the use of various cultural channels of communication for the propaganda of tolerance, such channels include cinema, music, art, TV, mass media, etc. Educational method, like the sociocultural method, envisages the spread of information about the negative nature of political radicalism however it uses different channels of communication, in particular, the educational system.

In our view, an economic method should also be applied. It is new to this classification and it implies an indirect impact on the problem under consideration. This method involves exclusion of such economic means that permitting the emergence of social conditions conducive to the emergence of nationalism and Nazism.

In the Russian Federation, there is a wide range of legislative acts regulating counteraction to the spread of radical ideas. Article 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (the “Criminal Code”) is applied to the members of nationalistic radical groups. At the moment, there are a number of convicted nationalists, in some cases, repeatedly convicted. One of them is Martsinkevich, better known as “Cleaver,” who positions himself as a neo-Nazi and has been convicted under Article 282 three times.

As part of the activities of the “Restruct” movement [10], M. Martsinkevich carried out illegal violent actions against representatives of national minorities and a number of groups whose behavior in Russia is considered deviant by certain segments of the population. “Restruct” is not a registered movement, it does not have a program of its own or other official signs of a movement, but it had certain popularity, especially at the period when M. Martsinkevich was still at large.

It should be noted that in recent years M. Martsinkevich’s activity was reduced largely to aggressive radicalism. His project “Occupy-pedophile” was aimed at the prosecution of homosexuals and pedophiles or those whom “Restruct” considered as such. It is noteworthy that such activity started on the radical Nazi soil.

The cult of power and chiefdom as the main signs of radicalism, without its nationalist component, but including only its anti-democratic component, found its application in the activities of “Restruct.” It is assumed that although “Cleaver” ceased to use violent methods against members of national minorities, he has not ceased to be a neo-Nazi.

Article 282 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation does not provide an explanation regarding its wording, it does not say what should be considered “humiliation on a national basis,” this and other elements of the text of the Article allow an extremely wide interpretation of it.

In this connection, in March 2017, the Ministry of Communications and Media made a proposal to mitigate such legislative prohibitions. In particular, it proposed to raise the ban on the use of the image of the Nazi swastika (Nazi cross that was on the German flag in the years from 1933 to 1945) in cinema, education and fiction.

The following explanatory note was attached therewith:

“In accordance with the current legislation, it is an offence to publicly display Nazi symbols or paraphernalia, this legislative norm cannot be effectively applied, since on a formal basis it refers, for example, to any film or television production about the Great Patriotic War [8].”

At the moment, there are many situations in which works of art are subject to a ban on distribution because of the use of the symbols Nazi in nature. The most famous example was the proposal to ban the sale of the graphic novel by A. Spiegelman “Maus [5]” dedicated to the events in the Nazi concentration camp and the post-war consequences for one of the victims of the Holocaust.

However, it is noteworthy that the novel is purely anti-Nazi in character and imbued with sympathy for the victims of the Holocaust, in particular, to the father of the author of the novel, who is the protagonist of the novel. However, according to the current legislation, due to the numerous images of swastika image, the novel was banned for publication.

We believe that the dissemination of images of Nazi symbols and the citation of Nazi slogans for artistic, scientific and educational purposes is not propaganda. Many researchers, including political scientists, historians, sociologists, cultural scientists and other representatives of the academic circles of the humanities spectrum face this problem. Let’s consider the example of the main work by A. Hitler’s “My struggle,” prohibited for publication and distribution as an extremist material. Complete edition of the personal diaries of I. Goebbels, Head of the propaganda department of the NSDAP, one of the most prominent representatives of the party elite of the German state in 1933-1945, is banned for publication, as they contain, according to legislators, propaganda of Nazism [14]. In essence, judging by the excerpts from these diaries, available for reading, they do not represent propaganda in the classical sense of the word. Goebbels’ diaries describe the everyday life of the Third Reich and the internal order in the NSDAP. These facts are of great scientific interest and without them it is impossible to make a complete and multilateral assessment of the considered historical period.

It is noteworthy that many works permitted in the Russian Federation refer to “My struggle” and Goebbels’ diaries for scientific purposes. Thus, the American historian W. Shearer in his two-volume “Rise and fall of the Third Reich”, which according to the researcher, is the most complete and comprehensive scientific work on Nazi Germany, repeatedly quotes both of the above sources. However, for some reason, despite the fact that these quotes contain direct extremist appeals, “Rise and fall of the Third Reich” continues to be sold and actively used in the research work by a majority of researchers of Nazism.

The sociocultural method is widely used in most countries that have set themselves the task of preventing the spread of ideas of the national socialist spectrum. This method involves the promotion of ideas of tolerance through cinema, television, literature and media, as well as any other media channels, including various Internet portals [2. P. 37-48].

When using the sociocultural method, it is necessary to understand that it often does not include an element of institutional and administrative resources – unlike, for example, a group of methods of legislative prohibitions. In this case, it is necessary to form a civil society, which, represented by the authors of various projects, will be ready to create works of culture promoting the idea of tolerance. At the same time, state funding of such works cannot be excluded. As an example of such funding we see a large number of military patriotic films praising the feat of the Soviet people in the fight against the Nazi invaders, that have been shot in recent years.

Speaking about the foreign experience of the sociocultural method application it should be noted that there is a number of such films. “Schindler’s List” (it was awarded seven Oscars in 1994) [13] directed by S. Spielberg is the most famous and most awarded feature film dedicated to the history of Nazi Germany. Its appearance on the screens caused a surge of positive reviews, comments and arguments in the media about the problem of neo-Nazism, the heyday of such interest in the United States of America was in the 90-ies of the XX century.

However, in the Russian Federation, films made with the support of the Ministry of Culture carry a more subtle message than the military-patriotic films.

According to F. Bondarchuk, who directed the fantastic film “Attraction” with the support of the Cinema Fund in 2017, although the film does not directly speak about the problems of nationalism provides the viewers with an appropriate allusion [7]. The main message of “Attraction” is reduced to xenophobia of earthlings in relation to the newcomers who arrive on the Earth by accident. Describing the message of the film, Fyodor Bondarchuk repeatedly mentioned nationalist pogroms (we are talking about the pogroms in the Moscow area of Western Biryulyovo) and said that it’s not by accident that the film takes place in the Moscow area of Chertanovo, that is considered disadvantaged and the population of which, according to a common stereotype, is nationalistically minded.

We believe that works of culture, created without the state participation influence the society more effectively, since their production is not conditioned by a pre-set socio-cultural prerequisite and the willingness of the people to adopt such position.

The state can potentially use such a resource, but due to the need to create such a prerequisite, this method is somewhat losing its political and social effectiveness.

The educational method does not lose its relevance and, in the authors’ opinion, is the most effective.

The methods of this group are supposed to provide for the change of the school curriculum with the view of spreading the ideas of tolerance.

In many Russian cities, such approach requires special attention, as in our multi-ethnic country there are often conflicts between children on the national basis, this is especially true for the cities where people feel their national identity most acutely.

According to a number of studies, nationalist sentiments are extremely rare among children under the age of 7 to 8 years and if they occur, they result from extremely chauvinistic position of their parents. We believe that it is necessary to work with children of preschool age, explaining to them in a simple, accessible and understandable form that our state is multinational and that representatives of all ethnic and social groups are equal.

Formation of older children should be carried in a slightly different direction. Adolescents are developing their own civic position, and it is important not to miss the moment when they may lean towards neo-Nazism and other radical ideas. As a rule, such situations arise in dysfunctional families and against appropriate social background that the school as an important social institution must strive to eliminate.

The educational method can be applied not only in the form of special talks with students during the class hours, but also to be integrated into certain school subjects, in particular, the humanities.

Such subjects as social studies and history should constantly convey to the students the idea of tolerance, but only using specific examples in order not to be perceived by children as an annoying propaganda.

In 2016, a single textbook on the history of Russia was written in the Russian Federation. It was developed with the idea of presenting to the students the image of Russia as a multinational state with a rich history created by representatives of many ethnic groups and cultures [12].

An innovation for the model under consideration is the description of the economic method, which is the most indirect of all the above.

The economic method consists in the creation by the state and the society of a situation in which not only social but also financial prerequisites for the formation of national socialist sentiments will be absent.

In richer societies, the level of social aggression is lower and the level of crime depends on the economic well-being. In countries such as Sweden, where the level of GDP and economic development is recognized by the majority of index-making agencies as the most developed [9], there is currently a minimum level of crime and xenophobia against migrants arriving in the country, despite the difficult situation with migration flow in Europe as a whole.

Despite the fact that this method is very indirect, it inevitably leads to a decrease in the level of nationalist sentiment.

Thus, the described group of methods is quite effective and, if properly implemented, can contribute to the preventing of the spread of radical political ideologies, xenophobia, neo-Nazism, etc. We suggest to consider the educational method as the most effective and the legislative method, at least in the conditions of the Russian Federation, as the one that needs to be revised and updated.

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