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UKRAINIAN POLITICAL PROJECT: FROM GOVERNMENT INSUFFICIENCY TO SOCIAL DEGRADATION

A political analysis of the Ukrainian state project is being carried out. The idea of state insufficiency of modern Ukraine stands out as the starting point. The analysis shows that for a quarter of a century Ukraine has not been able to overcome any of the crisis stages: identity, penetration, legality, participation and distribution, and in the strict sense has not acquired the obligatory signs of statehood.

The authors trace the dynamics of the socio-economic and humanitarian-political problems of an irreversible character or, otherwise, systemic degradation of the society. They point out to the shadowing of the economy, de-industrialization of the country, the demographic collapse, the crisis of the educational system, total corruption, formation of a carnival political culture and moral degradation.

Key words: *Ukrainian political project, state insufficiency, crises of the state formation, corruption, shadow economy, de-industrialization, society degradation.*

A quarter of a century is a historically insufficient period for the final conclusions about the results of the Ukrainian state-building. But such period of time is quite enough for an interim, current assessment of the “Ukraine” state-political project with a view to its viability / insolvency. For this purpose, we use two types of criteria. We borrow one from the American sociology and the second from the national theory of state and law. In the first case, we refer to the well-known concept of the inevitability of the five crisis stages in the course of formation of a national-state entity; in the second case, we compare the currently existing main features of Ukrainian state with the generally accepted features of a classical state.

Any newly formed state is characterized by the so-called crises or formation stages. The generally recognized phases of a developing state are crises of identity (ethnicity), legality, penetration, participation and distribution [6].

The identity crisis is the first barrier on the way to the national state formation. Even highly developed countries, such as the USA, Great Britain, Belgium or Spain rarely manage to fully overcome that crisis. Ukraine, in this respect, is closer to the African countries, where people consider themselves to be members of a tribe rather than Nigerians or Ugandans, unlike people in the United States and European countries. Ukrainian political nation has not yet been formed. No single identification criterion has been developed. There is an intraspecific competition between the ultranationalist regions (such as Galicia) and the moderately nationally oriented Center, there are sharp differences between the West of the country and its East. Russian-speaking Ukrainian nationalism has emerged and is gaining momentum. The Hungarian population in Transcarpathia feels uncomfortable. Despite the official ban on the dual citizenship, a significant number of Ukrainians have Russian, Hungarian, Polish or Romanian passports.

Legality also does not appear from above. For this, the young Ukrainian state had to cultivate in its citizens a sense of respect and a desire to obey, to widely disseminate among its people an understanding of legality of its regime. Instead, starting with V. Yushchenko, the thesis of “criminal power” was introduced into the public consciousness. Further more, there happened the non-recognition of the results of the presidential election, an appointment of the third ballot not envisaged by law, organization of street riots under the guise of the “Orange Revolution” and the “Revolution of Dignity”. In Ukraine, like nowhere else, the law is trampled and despised.

Penetration. The penetration crisis means that the entire population, including the most remote and culturally alien regions, must gradually submit to the will and the prescriptions of the Center. It should be recognized that the gravitational force of Kiev has always been weak in respect of the problematic regions and was reduced to only one thing: financial subsidies. The Center did not strive to assert its authority throughout the entire state territory, which ultimately prepared the ground for the alienation of certain territories, the further weakening of Kiev and revealed a tendency towards “the country’s somalization.”

Participation. In principle, this crisis means the desire of people, in response to the establishment of political domination over them, to weaken or counterbalance it by participation in determining their own destiny. As a minimum, people should at least feel that they are participating in the political life in order to develop a sense of national community. The participation crisis should be preferably resolved through unhurried, gradual measures. A classic example of such approach is the UK experience. A series of reforms in that country during the XIX century steadily expanded the right of the people to participate in elections and granted such a right to more and more people. It allowed government struc-

tures and people to gradually adapt to each other. Democracy made sense and participation of the people was complete. But when democratic laws literally fall on the people unprepared for it, the result is very far from true democracy. The example of Ukraine in this regard is quite indicative. Mass street protests under the slogans “Ukraine without Kuchma”, the “Orange Revolution” and, especially, the “Revolution of Dignity” are nothing more than the standards of an ochlocracy, carried out for the money of local oligarchs with the support of foreign puppeteers. The use of an oclocratic toolkit under the guise of democratic participation in the long term causes irreparable damage to the very idea of the state. As for the young and emerging statehood, it contributes to anarchic sentiments and leads to the creation of a structure only resembling a state.

Distribution. In a sense, the “distribution crisis” is insurmountable. The problem lies in the ambiguity of the concept of “social justice”. What is considered fair for the working classes is not so for the privileged strata. At the same time, highly developed countries mostly managed to cope with the distribution crisis. In these countries, the share of the middle class ranges from 60 to 65%, the poorest segments of the population have social assistance at the level not lower than the subsistence minimum and the decile coefficient ranges from 5 to 7. Ukraine, on the contrary, shows negative dynamics in the development of this crisis. The liberal reforms of the 90s brought the following results: 2% of the population won, 18% did not lose and 80% became either poor or impoverished. At the time of economic growth (the beginning of the zero years), there was a period when the size of the wealth of the main oligarch R. Akhmetov reached 40% of the state budget. The decile coefficient is recognized at the level of 19, which seems to be significantly underestimated. The national situation is aggravated by the fact that all the crises of the state formation in Ukraine have come and are proceeding simultaneously and the difficulties of overcoming them so far dominate over the possibilities of their resolution. The present-day Ukraine is characterized by pronounced state insufficiency, by which we mean a whole complex of deviations from the normal functioning of the state, starting with the process of becoming a state and ending with the presence of its classical features.

Public authority as the first feature of statehood means that the state is not only a representative and spokesman of the national interests, but also a power that does not merge with the society, but rises above it. The state in the classical sense of the word is an organization that monopolizes the right to coerce its citizens, having an appropriate mechanism for this and resorting to violence in cases provided for by law. In this regard, Kiev Maidans of 2004 to 2005 and 2013 to 2014 are convincing evidence that the Ukrainian state, firstly, has not become a common spokesman and general representative of the national interests; and secondly, it does not have a monopoly on the use of force; moreover, the authorities did not prevent the emergence in Ukraine of numerous illegal armed groups that defy legitimate authority.

Sovereignty is an inalienable sign of statehood and means an independence of state power from any other power both inside the country and abroad. Since its independence, Ukraine is not a fully sovereign state. Moreover, the volume of Ukrainian sovereignty has been shrinking over the time. It shrinks as the state becomes more and more economically and financially dependent. At present, the state debt of Ukraine amounts to US\$ 77.36 billion [4]. In the years 2018 to 2020, the country is supposed to repay US\$16 billion of short-term debts from the 2018 state budget of US\$35 billion. Accordingly, in a voluntarily-compulsory manner Ukraine has transferred to the West the right to take vital military and political decisions.

Population and territory as a feature means that state power covers with its influence absolutely all people residing within the territorial boundaries of the state. The state power of Ukraine did not manage to bring the population factor in conformity with the territorial factor. In 1991, Ukraine was lucky to have an area equal to the territory of France (600 thousand km²) and the population of 52 million. According to some estimates, today the population has decreased to 30 million and the territories of Crimea and Donbas have been lost. The cause of such catastrophe is not at all aggressive Russia, but Ukraine suffering from the state insufficiency.

The weakness of the Ukrainian state system and the state apparatus has led to a number of socio-economic and humanitarian-political problems of irreversible character or, to put it differently, to the systemic degradation of the society. Evidence of this is the high level of shadow economy, the de-industrialization of the country, the crisis of the educational system, total corruption, emergence of the carnival political culture and the collapse of moral standards.

The shadow economy of Ukraine has become structured. It contains several blocks or sectors, such as productive, redistributive, criminal and fictitious. Only the productive sector makes a real contribution to the GDP. At the same time, within that sector, legal types of economic activities are carried out illegally with hidden production or work without a license. In other areas, there are tax evasion, illegal production, overestimation, bribes and profiteering. Special mention should be made of the criminal economy, an unproductive sector of the economic activity. In this area, an economic structure has been formed to ensure super-profits of a relatively small group of people through law manipulation, extortion, robbery and grand larceny.

In the 90s, racketeering groups took control of virtually all new business entities and a significant part of state enterprises and brought the shadow sector of the Ukrainian economy to 40% of the GDP. The state apparatus, first and foremost the power structures, underwent criminal corrosion, merging with the semi-criminal clans. Thus, mafionization of the society began.

In terms of shadowing the economy, “the dashing 90s” in Ukraine have not sunk into oblivion and have not gone down in history. Even today, the Ukrain-

ian state either does not want or can not bring the economy from the “shadow.” There are no signs of reforms of the national system of financial control over the implementation of illegal economic activities. There are no changes in the organizational structure of the state holding companies, etc.

Along with the shadow economy, the tendency of *de-industrialization* of Ukraine is clearly manifested. In 2014, the degree of depreciation of production assets reached 83.5%. The share of industry in the GDP is steadily declining. According to the economic expert Y. Buzdugan when Ukraine was declared an independent state it “was comparable to Germany, England or France in its industrial potential. The basis of such industrial potential constituted 8500 industrial corporations. Today there are less than a thousand of them left” [1].

Ukraine voluntarily or unwittingly turns into an agrarian-industrial country. According to the Prime Minister’s statement, the agricultural sector currently constitutes from 17 to 18% of the GDP, while in the European countries, and Ukraine aspires to become one of them, it ranges from 0.7% (in Germany) to 4.6% (in Romania). Ukraine has outstripped even Moldova in the agrarianization of its economy (14%) [10].

De-industrialization of the country means if not a historical dead end, then, at least, a dangerous stagnation, a heavy blow on the human capital. Mass job loss due to job cuts is becoming commonplace. People either turn to other activities, becoming part of the shadow economy or emigrate abroad. The number of emigrants to Russia, Poland and other countries is measured in the millions. In sum, widespread social degradation occurs.

Deindustrialization entails budget shortfall. The budget deficit adversely affects culture, health care and education. The Ukrainian state is forced to resort to borrowings, increasing its already overwhelming debts and more and more falling under external control.

The bulk of the Ukraine’s debt is an external debt. As of 2018, Ukraine’s external public debt exceeded US\$48.5 billion. According to the IMF, Ukraine’s public and publicly guaranteed debt should not exceed 60% of the GDP, while in reality it is estimated at between 84 to 91% of the GDP. In terms of each Ukrainian, the national debt translates into US\$ 1.76 thousand.

In total, economic degradation blocks the Ukrainian society potential: human, resource and technological potential. It preserves poverty and misery, or more precisely, the unacceptable income gap between the rich and the poor. The economic stagnation is followed by a catastrophic situation in the areas of *science and education*.

The first problem in those areas is underfunding. In his “throne” speech, the first President of independent Ukraine mentioned 16% of the GDP as the target spending on science and education. 25 years later, the state plans to allocate to that sphere exactly 100 times less (0.16%) and the real amount may be even less, at the level of 0.3% (for comparison: in the USA 2.9% of the GDP goes to science, in France – 23%, in Czech Republic – 2% and in Lithuania – 1%) [3].

Ukrainian science has long been in need of incorporation into the real sector of economy in order to implement certain developments in an applied way, cooperation between universities, science and business is really needed. Due to the lack of such integration, there are sensitive losses, “brain drain” of young talents, aging of the academic personnel and a lack of scientific progress.

The situation in the higher education is no better. There are significant imbalances in the education and training of specialists. The number of graduates from the law schools and schools of economics is significantly higher than the number of specialists in technological areas.

A fall in the professional level of professors and teachers is steadily continuing. Along with the “brain drain”, there is aging of the teaching personnel and its weak update due to the loss of the prestige of the teaching work.

The material base is also aging, especially in the field of natural and technical sciences.

The number of universities has grown and has gone beyond a reasonable explanation. In the USSR, there were 600 universities for the population of 300 million people and the universities annually accepted about 23% of the school graduates. In today Ukraine, at the end of 2017, there were 657 operating higher education institutions and a large number of their branches, which each year accept up to 80% of applicants. According to teachers, most of the students, whose training is conducted on a fee basis, are not able to master the university programs, never the less, they are artificially saved from expulsion, since massive expulsion entails a massive reduction in the number of students.

Ukraine has also embarked on the path of total illiteracy. In the current school year, the number of schools will be reduced by 162. For comparison, the number of schools in Russia in the same period will increase by 170. According to UNESCO, over 300 thousand children in Ukraine do not attend school [7].

Corruption is a serious legal, political and moral problem in Ukraine. It is known that corruption is not only a criminal offense, but also a moral deformity. Back in 2007, Ukraine ranked 118th in terms of corruption according to the index of the international organization Transparency International.

In the following years, the monitoring in Ukraine showed only a growth of the corruption index. In 2012, the international audit company Ernst & Young (EY) included Ukraine among the most corrupt countries in the world, giving it a third place. Five years later, Transparency International in terms of the corruption perception index put Ukraine already in 131st place out of 176 countries studied [5].

Finally, after the so-called “Revolution of Dignity”, which is considered to have an anti-corruption orientation, the level of corruption not only did not fall, but, on the contrary, grew up. According to the April 2017 monitoring of the level of corruption in 41 countries carried out by the international company EY, Ukraine took the first place [11].

Bribery and corruption in Ukraine are systemic, moreover, they are one of the braces and backbone factors of the modern Ukrainian society. In the heyday

of corruption in the state, not only those who take, but also those who give are guilty. The largest bribe takers in the country are, according to statistics, law enforcement officers, medical workers and representatives of the education system [9]. Bribes are given in order to receive the necessary services on a permanent basis or on a one-time basis.

Corruption permeates all spheres of the society, a peculiar corruption exchange has developed in the country. A health worker takes a bribe from an official in the civil service, in order to give it, say, to a university professor; a professor, by bribing, resolves his issue with a representative of a business structure; a businessman bribes a judge or a prosecutor to stop administrative proceedings, prosecute them or get a positive court decision.

At the same time, Ukrainians started to perceive corruption as a norm and an expected phenomenon, which greatly facilitates the resolution of any issue. Opinion polls show that from 20% to 40% of the population of Ukraine have participated in the process of corruption in various segments of socio-economic or political life [8].

Special attention should be paid to the moral degradation factor. Perhaps the most significant achievement of the Soviet era is the phenomenon of the Soviet person (homosovetikos), in other words, a moral person. Homosovetikos is not a “scoop,” crushed, inert uninitiative idiot. Homosovetikos is a personally humble, conscientious person, recognizing such concepts as honor, duty, oath, responsibility, empathy, compassion and selflessness, he is oriented to the high and holy. The Soviet people as a product of the Soviet era considered the norms of self-sacrifice in the name of higher goals a just cause and found them natural. For the Soviet man the notion of a “saint” was not an empty sound. The Great Victory was considered holy. Eternal fire, the sacred fire, the memory of the dead heroes were holy. The feat of our ancestors is a sacred feat. The brotherhood of nations is unshakable and holy.

What has become of the personality of the citizen of today independent Ukraine? What features can describe his moral and psychological portrait? In the shortest possible way it can be formulated as a total rejection of anything Soviet or Russian, of his own past. It's hard not to call this fact a betrayal, because it's not just about abandoning family relationships with a large family, but about moving into the camp of the enemy, opponent and competitor. By committing civilization betrayal, the Ukrainian authorities betrayed historical memory, common misfortunes and common victories, which in the metaphysical terms mean sacrilege and moral sin. For the younger generation, grown up in the conditions of abandoning the great-natured character of the war, cooking scrambled eggs on an eternal flame is just fun and entertainment. It does not even occur to them that such act is a manifestation of not only a spiritual misery, but also of moral deformity.

The break of centuries-old friendship and kinship with Russia, the ugly Rus-sophobia, is not so much political as a moral crime of Ukraine as a state. The aban-

donment of all Russian under the guise of decommunism is a manifestation of collective insanity and collective wickedness. The policy of total renaming of cities and villages, streets and squares, schools, universities and other institutions with the aim of erasing from the human memory of anything Russian and planting of new names and interpretations on the ethnical principle is the manifestation of a complex of national inferiority, political shortcomings and moral deterioration.

By drawing from the non-existence the psedoheroes like Mazepa, Petliura, Skoropadsky, Bandera and Shukhevich, the state exposes itself to fun, demonstrates its political poverty and moral ugliness of the historical characters declared national heroes.

Politically, they are all losers. They all have been defeated and can not serve as examples. Their political projects were not good. Morally, they are all either traitors or bandits. Their only “virtue” is that they are all Russophobes and therefore homegrown.

An attempt to induce to the Ukrainian people that those heroes fought for Ukraine and therefore deserve recognition raises the question about Ukraine they fought for. Against whom did they fight? Who were their allies? And it turns out that in all cases they first fought together with Russia, then with the Swedes and then with the Germans. Particularly noteworthy is the connection between the Ukrainian nationalists and Hitler Nazism. What Ukrainian independence could be discussed under the Third Reich conditions?

Heroism as such is a moral concept. The heroization of Bandera and Shukhevich by the Ukrainian authorities is a discreditation of the very idea of heroes and heroism, deprivation of feat and feats of their moral component.

We already wrote on the topic of “Ukraine” as a political project [2. P. 115-126]. In that study, the emphasis was on the collapse of political romanticism and failure of the Ukrainian state. At that time, we noted that “the Ukrainian people are numerous, industrious, cultural, not aggressive, cheerful, singing, but ... not state-minded.” We pointed out to the absence of a “stable mechanism for the reproduction of its own state elite” as a reason for the people being not state-minded. Thus, a clear distinction was made between the authorities and the people. At present, the situation in Ukraine seems much more alarming. The state exists purely in the formal dimension. The government insufficiency provokes a lack of political culture, vital pessimism and Russophobic aggression in the society. The process of moral degradation of the society as a whole is in full swing. The only thing that can save the Ukrainian society from the collapse is the Russian government it hates.

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