

Ukrainian National Identity in Donetsk Region: Problems and Development Trends from the End of the XIX - to the Beginning of the XXI Century

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Received: May 16, 2021; Accepted: August 8, 2021; Published: August 17, 2021

Abstract

In the context of the modern military-political conflict in Donbass, the national identity of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region attracts considerable attention. After all, it is thanks to the self-determination and self-identification of the individual that an adequate national and political identity is formed. But as a result of the post-totalitarian syndrome, Ukrainian society was unable to achieve this. The national identity of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region during the period from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century underwent a rather complex transformation (first of all, a significant Russification). As a result, there was a deformation of cultural and national identity and a leveling of consciousness. Subsequently, this led to a crisis in the socio-political position of the individual and the population of this region. During the existence of the totalitarian regime in the Ukrainian SSR, a process of total Russification was observed. At the same time, the main blow was directed at the national identity of the inhabitants of the industrial regions of Ukraine, in particular - Donbass. During the 1920s - 1930s, the Ukrainian nation in general and the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region in particular experienced the formation of a Bolshevik totalitarian regime. At the same time, the latter set himself the goal of destroying the national consciousness and identity of Ukrainians. During the 1940s - the first half of the 1980s, a process of total Russification was observed in the Ukrainian SSR. As a result, the national identity of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region was significantly damaged. The period of the second half of the 1980s - early 1990s marked a gradual departure from the denationalized self-consciousness of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region. However, it was not easy to get rid of the Soviet stereotypes imposed on citizens for decades. It was at this time that the process of national revival began in the Donetsk region. As a result of the formation of the Donetsk Regional Society of the Ukrainian Language named after Taras Shevchenko, a new perspective for the active development of the national identity of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region appeared. The population of the region was able to make a choice in the direction of independent national and cultural development. However, at the beginning of the XXIst century, the doctrine of the "Russian World" began to spread actively on the territory of the Donetsk region. This resulted in the Russian occupation and the emergence of the quasi-formation of the "DPR" in April 2014.

Keywords: national identity, Donetsk region, national consciousness, "Russian World"

1. Introduction

The problem of national identity is quite popular among the Ukrainian scientific community. This is primarily due to the fact that the definition of Ukrainian identity can be a certain theoretical means of creating a national state. At the same time, a theoretical solution to this problem helps to highlight the real national interest, the awareness of which is a necessary component of the development of Ukrainian society. The problem of nationality in general and national identity in particular was quite stable in the twentieth century, and in modern times it has only become aggravated. At the same time, the paradigm of national self-awareness and the formation of the identity of Ukrainians deserves special attention.

The Ukrainian language for all regions of Ukraine throughout its history has remained the leading factor in the formation of national identity. During the long national liberation struggle for their own statehood, Ukrainians have always relied on national culture, and in particular, their own language as a determining means of spiritual

self-development. At the same time, the preservation of the native language was one of the main slogans of the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians in the first half of the 20th century, including in the Donetsk region.

2. Formation of Ukrainian national identity in Donetsk region in the late 19th - early 20th centuries

Russians from neighboring Russian provinces began to move to Donetsk region, a region populated mainly by Ukrainians, from the second half of the 19th century. This process intensified significantly during the existence of the Soviet Union. According to H. Kuromiya, Donbass has always attracted labor, but the elimination of unemployment and the lack of labor in the context of accelerated industrialization have increased its magnetic appeal. Historically, Donbass has always given shelter to fugitives, it retained its attractiveness of a free steppe during collectivization: whoever had reasons to flee believed that they could hide in Donbass [1]. It was quite easy to hide in the Donetsk region. After all, this "all-Russian stoker" had a great need for workers.

According to the population census conducted in 1897, the dynamics of the ethnic composition of the population of the Yekaterinoslav province, which mainly included the territory of modern Donetsk region, at the end of the 19th century. was determined by active migration processes, first of all - the influx of labor to the mines and enterprises of Donbass from the Voronezh, Kursk, Penza, Ryazan, Tambov provinces, etc. According to this - the first general population census in the Russian Empire, conducted on February 9, 1897, the ethnic composition of the population of the Yekaterinoslav province was rather motley, but the overwhelming majority were Ukrainians. So, in the Bakhmut district, with a total population of 332,478 people, Ukrainians accounted for 193,510 people (58.2%), Russians - 103702 (31.19%), Jews - 9457 (2.84%), Germans - 12646 (3.8%). In the Mariupol district, with a total population of 254,056 people, Ukrainians accounted for 117,206 people (46.13%), Russians - 35691 (14.05%), Jews - 10291 (4.05%), Germans - 19104 (7.52%) [2].

Starting from the end of the 19th - during the 20th century, a kind of Donetsk regional identity was formed. This took place both in large cities of the Donetsk region (Donetsk, Makeyevka, Gorlovka, etc.) and in small industrial towns and villages. Due to the purposeful and systemic Russification of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire, the national and cultural development of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region was rather weak. This problem has become especially acute since the end of the 19th century. Then, the trends of industrialization and urbanization of Donbass were added to the imperial chauvinist policy of the Russian autocracy.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the national and cultural awareness of the identity of Ukrainians in the Donetsk region remained at a rather low level. Perhaps the only positive factor in the development of the Ukrainian national consciousness was the rather vigorous activity of the Prosvita society. This was especially evident in the northern part of the Donetsk region. The activities of the "Prosvita" society were aimed at the development of Ukrainian culture and the national revival of Ukrainians.

3. The Development of Ukrainian National Identity in the Donetsk Region During the 1920s - Early 1930s

Immediately after coming to power, the Bolsheviks began a systematic policy of denationalizing Ukraine: several terrible Holodomors, constant repressions against the native speakers of the Ukrainian language - the peasantry and conscious intelligentsia, mass resettlement of Ukrainians to Siberia, Kazakhstan, northern and eastern regions of Russia, and Russians - vice versa to Ukraine [3]. This was especially true of the Donbass, which was considered by the Bolsheviks as a kind of springboard for the policy of Russification and denationalization.

According to H.-G. Haupt and J. Kocka, the goal of the imperial discourse of the Soviet Union in relation to its national "colonies" was the formation of a "socialist" identity according to the formula "socialist in content, national in form" [4].

The process of Ukrainization gave impetus to the revival of Ukrainian national culture, primarily literature and art. But due to total Russification, the problem of confrontation between two cultural and political factors arose: Russian and Ukrainian [5]. This, too, gave the Bolsheviks the basis to begin the total destruction of nationally conscious Ukrainians.

Ivan Dziuba noted that the general upsurge in the process of "Ukrainization" frightened the Bolsheviks enough. They saw in this the danger of "separatism" and "nationalism". The Soviet leadership proclaimed those Ukrainian communists like M. Skrypnyk or O. Shumsky, who sought to defend the national Ukrainian interests, as "national deviators" [6].

In the 1920s, Ukrainian national self-determination in the Ukrainian SSR took place in the key of class organization. The main base of the national self-determination of Ukrainians remained the peasant environment. At the end of the 1920s, there was an increase in the size of the army, mainly as a result of the mobilization of mainly representatives of the peasantry into its ranks. At the same time, an active ideological indoctrination of servicemen was taking place in the Red Army. Therefore, the Ukrainians in the army lost their ancestral roots. This was also

facilitated by the active measures taken by the Soviet government to destroy the institution of the traditional family. At the same time, it was not private, but class consciousness that was promoted to the first place. It was the traditional family that was able to ensure national identity, passing on its traditions from generation to generation. And the Soviet "new family" was deprived of its identity [7]. Quite clearly these processes, however, in the context of the industrial towns of Donbass, were described in his autobiographical work "The Third Company" by V. Sosyura.

It was from the late 1920s in the Ukrainian SSR, and especially in the Donbass, the purposeful persecution of the Ukrainian language and artificial russification began. Using administrative-totalitarian methods, the Soviet government consistently eradicated everything related to Ukrainian identity, imposing Soviet identity. This was especially true of the Donbass, which was subjected to total Russification.

During the 1920s - early 1930s, the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region fully experienced the formation of the Bolshevik totalitarian regime. The latter set the destruction of the national consciousness and identity of Ukrainians as a primary goal. Consequently, the Bolsheviks paid special attention to the struggle against national identity, because it was it that most distinguished Ukrainians from the rest of the population of the USSR. This situation became especially aggravated during the Holodomor of 1932-1933. According to R. Conquest, in the then Donetsk region, up to 20% of the population died of hunger, and at least 400,000 peasants were killed by famine [8]. And these were mostly Ukrainians.

Ukrainian peasants testified that all the leaders were of a different nationality, mostly Russians. What mattered was how Ukrainians perceived Russians. Even if those who carried out collectivization, dispossession and grain procurement were Ukrainians. To the peasants, they seemed urbanized, and therefore Russified. For Ukrainian peasants, the harassment that resulted in famine was just another attempt by Moscow to strengthen the power of the Russians. Moscow, too, feared Ukrainian nationalism as a separatist force supported by the population of the villages where most of the Ukrainians lived [9]. During the Holodomor of 1932-1933, the offensive against Ukrainians in Donbass intensified. Almost all Ukrainian schools have been translated into Russian as the language of instruction; all technical schools used only Russian [10].

In the 1930s, the process of forming a new urban identity intensified in the Donetsk region. The determining factor of which was not the national-cultural, but the economic factor. Therefore, during the 1930s, quite active urbanization and migration processes were observed in the Donetsk region.

So, during the 1930s, the national identity of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region received a heavy blow. The conscious Ukrainian intelligentsia was practically annihilated with the exception of its individual representatives. The main basis of the Ukrainian national identity - the peasantry - remained bloodless for a long time as a result of the Holodomor of 1932-1933.

4. The State of Ukrainian National Identity During the Nazi Occupation of Donbass

During the Second World War, a fairly powerful network of Ukrainian nationalists headed by E. Stakhiv was deployed in the Donetsk region. Ukrainian nationalists had significant support among the intelligentsia. At the same time, representatives of the less educated part of the Donetsk region residents took a more passive socio-political position. That part of the intelligentsia that survived the repressions, or was disappointed in the communist ideology, sought to change the Soviet regime not only in the social, but also in the political and ideological dimensions. For the Nazis, this was quite important. After all, they considered Ukraine as a colony.

In terms of the scale of activity of Ukrainian nationalists in the Donetsk region, Mariupol was noted to the greatest extent. Although, according to V. Nikolsky, here the nationalist underground was noticeably inferior to the communist [11].

The Mariupol revival, as well as the general revival of the Ukrainian national and cultural life in the Donetsk region, did not last long. At the end of 1942, the Germans stepped up their repressive measures against the Ukrainians. They were arrested: one of the initiators of the national and cultural revival of the city M. Stasyuk and the chairman of the Mariupol society "Education", director of the Ukrainian theater, Ukrainian of Greek origin A. Iriy.

During the period of the Nazi occupation on the territory of the Donetsk region, there was a fairly significant activation of the religious-church and national-cultural life of the Ukrainians of this region. This gives grounds to assert that there was a national and cultural revival of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region at that time. However, the occupation administration, in order to control and implant its ideological propaganda, significantly narrowed the cultural space for the population of the Donetsk region. And in relation to the most active figures of the Ukrainian national and cultural revival, the Nazis used repressive measures.

5. Transformation of Ukrainian National Identity in Donetsk Region During the 1950s - First Half of the 1980s

The Donetsk region for a long time was a kind of "melting pot", which combined various national, linguistic, religious and cultural characteristics and factors. Some cities of the region, for example, Mariupol, Starobeshevo, Volnovakha, Amvrosievka, Donetsk, Makeevka, despite cultural differences, retain signs of this process.

As I. Todorov notes, many asocial and criminal elements from all over the Soviet Union arrived in Donbass. Because it was possible to get a job in the mines without documents. In 1959, the ethnic composition of the Donetsk region indicated that 55.6% of Ukrainians, 37.6% of Russians and 6.8% of representatives of national minorities lived in the region. As a result of this ethnic heterogeneity, the emphasis has shifted towards the social structure. At the same time, priority was given to ideology. It was based on the postulates of proletarian solidarity, internationalism and the Russian language (as the language of international communication). And also the ideas of class hatred and, as a result, contempt for culture and education. For fifty years, the ethnic composition of the Donetsk region has hardly changed. The ideology of preference also remained similar. Linguistic affiliation has traditionally been of significant importance in the Donetsk region, since about 75% of its residents recognized their native language – Russian [12]. And this was the result of total Russification.

Based on archival materials, A. Abdullin and O. Sytnyk in their research give a rather vivid picture of the formation of the crime situation in Donbass. The researchers pointed out that the Donbass was at the crossroads of the most socio-cultural influences: it received immigrants from all over the Soviet Union. These territories were often inhabited by former criminals. Since the authorities sent them en masse to work at industrial facilities in Donbass. Thousands of these criminals settled in the industrial cities of the Donetsk region during the 1950s. They, as a rule, did not even have an elementary educational and cultural level. And this caused massive drunkenness and hooliganism. And objective self-organization and corporatism contributed to the fact that the behavior of this particular part of the population became a kind of standard for other residents, especially for young people [13]. And, basically, the descendants of the aforementioned criminal elements became the nucleus of the bandit groups of the 1990s, and in the spring of 2014 they were actively involved in the ranks of anti-Ukrainian formations such as Vostok, Kalmius, Oplot and others.

The Soviet totalitarian regime of the mid-twentieth century was aimed at denationalizing the republics of the USSR and forming an amorphous ethnic community called the "Soviet people". This formation was devoid of national identity. This project had no real perspective. However, the methods of its implementation relied on the repressive tools of the totalitarian regime. And as a result, over the course of several decades, the nationally conscious intelligentsia was exterminated on the territory of the Soviet Union. In general, teaching in national languages in educational, scientific and cultural institutions was eliminated or minimized. At the same time, pressure was exerted on all religious cults (with the exception of the Russian Orthodox Church). National traditions and customs were also destroyed. At the same time, it was the Ukrainian language that remained the decisive factor in the preservation of national and religious identity.

Having a thousand-year history and a rich tradition of development, the Ukrainian language not only opposed the Russian language, but also continued to develop despite the total Russification. During the 1930s-1980s, tendencies of discrimination against the Ukrainian language and national identity were increasingly growing in the Donetsk region.

6. Evolution of Ukrainian National Identity in Donetsk Region During the Period of Independence of Ukraine

The problem of preserving the Ukrainian language, national culture and the development of the national consciousness of Ukrainians in Donbass has become one of the defining features of the process of national revival. This process began already in the period of "perestroika" and the first years of Ukraine's independence. However, the inconsistency in the solution of this strategic task has led to a number of deformations and omissions. This was especially true of local and state authorities. In particular, this was the case in the Donetsk region. There, the process of national and linguistic development of Ukrainians was actually sabotaged. That later became one of the main reasons for the spread of the "Russian World" and separatist tendencies here.

The rise of social and political life in the Donetsk region in the late 1980s was primarily due to the process of restructuring of Soviet society. It was also influenced by certain significant factors that flowed from the state traditions of the Ukrainian nation. Thus, the Ukrainian national liberation movement at the beginning of the twentieth century had a great influence. It was the events of this movement that became an important ideological and political basis for the development of social and political organizations and movements in Ukraine as a whole. Especially - where there were great traditions of the national liberation struggle and a high level of national

consciousness of the population. But a certain influence of the tradition of the Ukrainian national liberation movement also took place in a more ethnopolitically complex region - in the Donetsk region.

Only in the period of the second half of the 1980s - early 1990s, a certain national and cultural revival took place in the Donetsk region. It was primarily associated with the activities of Ukrainian public organizations and cultural and national societies, which in every possible way sought to develop the national consciousness and linguistic identity of Ukrainians in Donetsk region.

Long before Ukraine gained independence, the problem of artificial opposition of the Ukrainian East and West arose. However, since the 1990s, and especially since the Orange Revolution, it has acquired a rather sharp political connotation. It was based on a number of unresolved issues of a historical nature related to the linguistic identity and national self-consciousness of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region.

Since the early 1990s, the local nomenclature in the South-East of Ukraine has tended to form a Russian enclave here. This was also facilitated by a part of the Russian-speaking intelligentsia, which traditionally focused on Moscow. Against the background of a blurred Ukrainian identity, separatist projects were promoted in the Donetsk region aimed at tearing the region away from Ukraine [14].

Galina Turchenko noted that in the Russian society there has always been a fundamental non-recognition of the fact of the existence of Ukrainians as a separate nation. Moscow's calling was considered to bring together parts of the former Russian Empire. At the same time, one of the main tasks of the Russian "development" of the South-East of Ukraine was the introduction of the "Russian World" here [15]. Former empires, as a rule, are heavily deprived of their great-power heritage. It is especially difficult to abandon the habit of imposing their standards of development on previously conquered peoples and to level the ideologemes, myths and stereotypes that feed the post-imperial consciousness. And at the same time, it is usually difficult for recent colonies to get rid of the inferiority and inferiority complexes imposed by the former imperial centers.

The hybrid aggression of the Russian Federation became an ordeal for the Ukrainians. In the conditions of the war unleashed against Ukraine, the adherents of the "Russian World" continue to develop this artificial doctrine, claiming "the formation of rather powerful Russian fronts in the Baltic States, Moldova, to a lesser extent in the Caucasian and Central Asian regions", special attention is paid to Belarus and Kazakhstan. And the main thing was determined by the Ukrainian frontier. The attempt to create "Novorossiya" and the unleashing of an armed conflict in the east of Ukraine showed a fairly large preparation of the Russian Federation for a comprehensive aggression against Ukraine.

In an undeclared war against Ukraine, Russia actively uses methods of information and psychological warfare, trying to destroy the morale of servicemen and civilians. population. I. Dziuba notes that on the territory of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR" there is a total "cleansing" of everything Ukrainian - from nationally oriented scientists, writers, journalists and cultural figures. Thus, the Donbass newspaper, the only Ukrainian-language newspaper among several hundred Russian-speaking ones, ceased to exist. Ukrainian television and radio broadcasting have become almost inaccessible. A Ukrainian book disappeared there, and a Ukrainian school was also destroyed. Even the persecution is arran [16]. Therefore, the current situation with Ukrainian identity in the occupied part of Donbass has become only a continuation of the systemic imposition of the "Russian World" in Ukraine and the deformation of the cultural and national identity of Ukrainians [17]. The initiators of the "Russian World" in the Donetsk region are trying to completely destroy the Ukrainian identity there.

Thus, it should be stated that the Ukrainian language in the Donetsk region succumbed to pressure as a result of Russification. Under the conditions of the imposition of the "Russian World" and discrimination of the Ukrainian language, the national identity and national consciousness of Ukrainians could not develop properly. As a result, at the beginning of 2014, an attempt at separatism was carried out in the Donbas. Although the majority in this region were Ukrainians. But they mostly lost their Ukrainian national consciousness and skills in their native language. And it was precisely such a denationalized ethnic mass that was an easy prey for zombifying and deforming consciousness. And as a result of the modern hybrid, information and sabotage war, there has been a total persecution of nationally conscious Ukrainians in the Donbass and its transformation into a zone of frozen military conflict.

7. Conclusion

In general, it should be noted that the Ukrainian language for all regions of Ukraine throughout its history remained the leading factor in the formation of national identity. For Ukrainians, the native language has always been a determining means of spiritual self-development. And this is in the context of the purposeful destruction of the

Ukrainian linguistic, cultural and national identity of Ukrainians. Preservation of the native language was one of the main slogans of the national liberation struggle of Ukrainians, including in the Donetsk region.

Basically, the individualistic orientation of ethnic self-expression of the Donetsk region's Ukrainians hindered the widespread development of their national identity and national self-awareness. As a result of massive Russification and the imposition of chauvinistic stereotypes, Ukrainians were purposefully turned into a dependent ethnic mass. The leaders of this policy were mainly former party and Komsomol functionaries. And, naturally, it was they who stood at the origins of separatism long before the spring of 2014. Moreover, many of these figures, while remaining ethnic Ukrainians, have lost their national identity and national consciousness.

In the context of the modern Russian-Ukrainian war, the occupation of Crimea and part of the Donbass, the problem of the national identity of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region has become especially urgent and instructive. Concessions on the language issue in Donbass allowed the pro-Russian forces here to prepare a fertile ground for further aggression and occupation of Ukrainian territories.

It is Ukraine that has been and remains the main planting target for the "Russian World". At the same time, Ukrainians have been subjected to artificial deformation of their cultural and national identity for centuries. And, in particular, the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region suffered the most from this. First of all, it was in this industrial region that the problem of national identity was especially acute for Ukrainians and usually boiled down to the following choice: either to Russify, or to suffer because of the repressive actions of the Soviet regime. At the same time, not only cultural identity was subjected to deformation, but also the national consciousness, mentality and ethnopsychology of the Ukrainian nation.

For many centuries, for Ukrainians, the language was one of the main means of preserving their own identity. Ukrainians have always had to defend their right to their own language. This problem remains relevant to this day, especially for the Ukrainians of Donbass. After all, they found themselves in a situation where the invaders are taking away their right to their own language and are destroying everything Ukrainian in every possible way. It is worth noting that the Ukrainian language in Donbass has been purposefully discriminated against for decades, and this process continued even during the period of Ukraine's independence. This also became one of the factors of the modern Russian occupation of the region.

It should be noted that in our time the Ukrainian language is becoming a determining factor in the self-determination and self-identification of a person. And this is one of the important signs of overcoming the post-totalitarian syndrome in society in Ukraine.

Despite the systemic and long-term policy of denationalization, the Ukrainian ethnos in the Donetsk region still retained a numerical advantage. However, already in the conditions of independence of the Ukrainian state, the problem of double identity came to the fore. The problem was primarily that many of these ethnic Ukrainians have lost their identity. At the same time, these Ukrainians, as a result of total Russification, became a favorable basis for the implementation of the "Russian World". The latter was aimed at the complete destruction of Ukrainian identity and nation.

For a better vision of ways out of this critical situation, it is necessary, among other things, to properly rethink the process of evolution of national and cultural awareness of the identity of Ukrainians in Donetsk region.

Language is an organic reality of the mentality of a people, a form of objectification of the deep layers of their collective unconscious. It determines not only the peculiarities of the people's reflection of their nature and history, but also creates the very way of worldview of this or that people. Language is not only a means of communication. This is a certain specificity of the culture. This is a certain worldview. It is through language that national consciousness separates scientific and everyday concepts, religious and mythological images, class and national ideologemes. Forming a certain structure, he rejects everything superfluous and unnatural. The doctrinal foundations of the so-called communist doctrine turned out to be so unusual for the Ukrainian spirit and Ukrainian national consciousness. The forms in which this teaching worked in Ukrainian society were by no means the result of the worldview of the proletarian international. At best, they were a distorted Russian national outlook. Moreover, it was deformed Bolshevism. Therefore, overcoming this worldview on Ukrainian soil was organically linked with the return of at least a small part of the Ukrainian population of Eastern Ukraine to their native language. This was especially true of the Ukrainians of the Donetsk region. It was the revival of the native language that became a process of unconstrained restructuring of consciousness, its reorientation to new values. And also - the restoration of national identity

Since the Ukrainian state in its essence is polyethnic and multicultural. One of its priority tasks is to unite and rally around the modern national idea of the entire Ukrainian nation, including representatives of other ethnic groups

living in Ukraine. The state Ukrainian language should become one of the consolidating factors. At the same time, it is national and cultural identity that usually acts as a determining factor in the development of civil society and a civilized state as a whole.

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