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## THE TRANSFORMATION OF BOLSHEVISM FROM A CLASS IDEOLOGY TO AN IMPERIALIST IDEOLOGY. THE UKRAINIAN CASE

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**Abstract:** *The article deals with the transformation of Bolshevism from a class ideology into an imperialist ideology. At the same time, an attempt was made to consider this problem in the Ukrainian context. The authors analyzed the essence of the Russian autocratic state as a despotic empire. It has been established that a particular goal of Russian imperialism was to keep Ukraine under its rule. It is emphasized that the Bolshevik regime continued the policy of neo-imperial expansionism. Particular attention is paid to forming the Ukrainian national-political identity under the conditions of Russian (Soviet) imperialism. The Bolshevik regime, in its totalitarianism, surpassed the imperial autocratic regime. At the same time, the Bolsheviks also sought to destroy the national identity of Ukrainians as much as possible.*

**Keywords:** *Bolshevism, class ideology, imperialist ideology, Ukraine, expansionism, Bolshevik regime, national identity, despotism, neo-imperialism.*

**Rezumat:** *Transformarea bolșevismului dintr-o ideologie de clasă într-o ideologie imperialistă. Cazul ucrainean. Articolul examinează procesul de transformare a bolșevismului de la o ideologie de clasă la o ideologie imperialistă în contextul ucrainean. Autorii cred că esența statului autocratic rus este imperială, despotică. O atenție deosebită este acordată formării identității național-politice ucrainene sub imperialismul rus (sovietic). Regimul bolșevic a depășit regimul autocratic imperial în totalitarismul său. În același timp, bolșevicii au căutat să distrugă pe cât posibil identitatea națională a ucrainenilor.*

### INTRODUCTION

The process of transforming Bolshevism from a class ideology into an imperialist ideology marked a new page in the history of the 20th century. And this especially affected Ukraine. Since the end of the 19th century in Russia, the formation of Bolshevism as an opposition party to the Russian autocracy has been observed. Furthermore, after 1917, Bolshevism gradually acquired signs of continuity concerning the Russian monarchist despotism. Russian Bolshevism absorbed the worst totalitarian traits of autocratic despotism and gradually transformed them into an extreme, misanthropic form of totalitarianism. In this process, ideology, propaganda, and all sorts of myths played a decisive role. The latter was closely associated with communist ideology. Bolshevism restored the autocratic policy of despotism, great-power chauvinism, Russification, and several other instruments for denationalizing national minorities. The Bolsheviks could take advantage of the country's military-political, socio-economic, and spiritual crisis. At the same time, they increasingly expanded their sphere of influence on the population of the former Russian Empire, which was especially evident in the ideological and agitation-propaganda sphere.

### **HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF THE PROBLEM**

The construction of various ideologemes and ideological systems is often carried out based on subjective or non-essential grounds. At the same time, various kinds of myths are especially actively used, which significantly harms the historical process. A more just position is that ideology should be based on constructive socio-political and socio-cultural schemes, principles, and ideas. Exploring the formation of totalitarian ideologies, H. Arendt characterizes them as the result of the mythologization of mass consciousness. At the same time, it was noted that totalitarian movements depend precisely on a mass character, and countries with a large population are most favorable for them.<sup>1</sup> Notably, the most totalitarian regime has developed in Russia, a large country with ancient despotic traditions. Then it spread to neighboring countries that were previously under the influence of the Russian Empire. The defining factor of the totalitarian regime was the communist ideology. Nikolai Berdyaev noted that Russian communism is challenging to understand because of its dual nature. After all, it is a Russian and national phenomenon and, simultaneously, a global one. At the same time, knowledge of Marxism cannot help in understanding the national roots of Russian communism and its determinism in Russian history.<sup>2</sup> Firstly, this is due to the extended stay of the Russian people in serfdom, and some other factors (first of all, the influence of Asian despotism) formed the specific features

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<sup>1</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Origins Of Totalitarianism*, New York, Harvest Book, 1973, p. 357.

<sup>2</sup> Nikolai Berdyaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* [Origins and meaning of Russian communism], Moskva, Nauka, 1990, p. 94.

of the Russian mentality. They became a favorable basis for the development of Bolshevism.

Here it is appropriate to indicate the position of M. Heller regarding the fact that the political concept of the Moscow autocracy was formed in Orthodox monasteries – in the conditions of confrontation with the despotic Asian “yoke”. Nevertheless, it was from this Asian Horde tradition that the Muscovite state borrowed many features. In particular, this applies the despotic nature of management and the policy of external expansion, the implementation of which began with the project “Moscow – the third Rome”.<sup>3</sup>

As O. Bagan noted, the leader of the Bolsheviks, J. Stalin, perfectly embodied the wills of Peter I into the reality of the 20th century. That is, the traditions of patriarchal Russia were replaced by active cooperation with the West. Adopting the technological merits of the West, the Bolsheviks sought to westernize the Russian state consciousness. However, simultaneously, in the ideological sphere, they continued to defend the utopian and inherently pro-Russian imperial ideals of communism.<sup>4</sup> Thus, a unique symbiosis of the traditions of patriarchal Russia and the Russian imperial tendency.

R. Service described the origin of communist doctrine in Europe and Russia before 1917. The communists believed only they had the doctrinal and practical potential to change society radically.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the Bolshevik revolution and the formation of the communist system in the territory of the former Russian Empire marked the establishment of a totalitarian regime.

V. Gafița noted that totalitarianism, as opposed to democracy, is a rather complex phenomenon. At the same time, certain types of totalitarianism (left and right) have signs of mutating democracy.<sup>6</sup> It should be added that since ancient Greece, there was a particular pattern of transformation of democracy into a totalitarian (despotic) regime. Moreover, the reason for this transformation was usually the weakness of democracy. However, this was typical of much later states, including the Russian Empire, where the despotic nature manifested itself primarily in the oppression of national minorities. In particular, this took place in the manifestations of chauvinism. Thus, the national question was among Russian society’s most vulnerable and urgent. This problem was especially acute for the national outskirts of the Empire.

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Heller, *Histoire de la Russie et de son empire*, Perrin, Collection Tempus, 2015, p. 244-248.

<sup>4</sup> Oleh Bahan, *Istoriosofs’ki ese* [Historiosophical Essays], O. Sytnyk (red.), Melitopol’, Naukovo-doslidnyy tsentr imeni Dmytra Dontsova, 2021, p. 181.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Service, *Comrades! History of World Communism*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 20-69.

<sup>6</sup> Vlad Gafița, *Landmarks of the Viral-Metamorphic Theory. A New Interpretation of Right-Wing Totalitarianism* (I), in “Codrul Cosminului”, Vol. 26, no. 2, 2020, p. 303-330.

According to C. Calhoun, the idea of a nation is usually associated with the assertion that a certain ethnic identity must be “superior” to all other forms of identity, including communal, family, class, and political. Nevertheless, this does not mean that nationalism erases the importance of all other identities. Such statements are made not only by nationalists and other participants in ethnopolitics but – implicitly – by the whole spectrum of common expressions in Western historical and sociological science.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, we conclude that the Ukrainian intellectual heritage was to some extent shaped by nationalist ideology and the experience of nation-building.

The idea of the nation was a kind of religion of states, which became a kind of “cement” that held citizens together with the state and provided the possibility of direct appeal of the state to its citizens, including several factors: religion, national, and above all – class. Since they were not connected with the state and defended not its interests but completely different ones, the more the population of constitutional states was drawn into the political struggle over elections, the more such appeals were addressed to them from all sides. Even individual unconstitutional states understood the political constructiveness of addressing citizens based on a national idea, like democratization. However, at the same time, it did not have the risks characteristic of democracy.

Along with this, there were calls for citizens to obey the authorities following the will of God. So, in the 1880s, the Russian Emperor Alexander III, faced with revolutionary agitation, turned to the policy that Nicholas I unsuccessfully tried to pursue in the 1830s. That is, Alexander III began to rely in his reign not only on the principles of autocracy and orthodoxy but also on the national idea, which mobilized the national feelings of the Russian people.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, in the second half of the 19th century, science became another core of the ideology of progress. And religion has become more and more a worldview stamp. The general loss of faith in God in the middle of the 19th century was perceived quite calmly in the Western world. Because the intellectual atheism of a significant part of the population gradually acquired the features of militant atheism. A new revolutionary ideology based on materialistic philosophy was increasingly conquering the world. At the same time, the old ideology, which had the idea of national liberation, fell noticeably into decline. The ideology, which in the Middle Ages was predominantly religious, gradually acquired a secular character.

In Western Europe, the militant attack on religion has, to a large extent, been combined with anti-clericalism. This trend covered all the intellectual currents of society – from moderate liberals to Marxists and anarchists. In Ukraine and on the territory of the Russian Empire as a whole, the situation was

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<sup>7</sup> Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Erik Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875–1914*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1987, p. 149.

not so critical. However, the so-called “progressive” forces (materialists, socialists, Marxists) were imbued with atheism and saw evil in religion and the church. Such an ideological confrontation between “progressive” and conservative forces was not clearly expressed until 1917. But since that time, it has grown into an open uncompromising struggle. Among its significant consequences was the emergence of that inhumane system, which, with the help of populism, demagoguery, and terror, could temporarily take over a vast living space. However, like everything false and hypocritical, it turned out to be unviable. Therefore, the decline of the Soviet system marked the collapse of the communist ideology.

One of the first who tried to create the concept of neo-Marxist ideology was K. Mannheim. He recognized that human ideas are shaped according to social circumstances, but he also sought to deprive ideology of negative connotations, primarily due to totalitarian dictatorships. The leading role belonged to political ideologies that restrained criticism of these regimes and advocated brutal regimented subjugation. Therefore, ideologies are unifying and serve as an instrument of social control, ensuring approval and submission.<sup>9</sup>

According to K. Mannheim, for the first time, ideologies appear and become dominant at a time when a particular political system begins to free itself from the direct power of inherited traditions and the direct dictate of religious and philosophical canons.<sup>10</sup> K. Mannheim sought to trace the dynamics of ideological content in the process of historical development. He, in particular, concluded that the deformation of reality is present at all stages of the formation and functioning of ideology. Accordingly, none of the social groups has objective truth, although ideology does not contain such truth. The ideological process does not lead to the purification of human knowledge from error, and therefore the criteria of truth or falsity do not apply to it. According to the scientist, truth is an attribute of an object, and it does not depend on the forms of involvement of this object in cognitive procedures: truth is represented by a fundamental process of knowledge. Therefore, Y. Dashkevich believes that K. Mannheim rejected Marx's identification of ideology with false consciousness and emphasized the functions of ideology, its efforts to protect the existing system.<sup>11</sup>

According to O. Zazdravnaya, the appeal to the phenomenon of ideology in our time requires a revision of the deep foundations of human social existence.

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<sup>9</sup> Fedir Kyryliuk, *Filosofiya politychnoyi ideolohiyi* [Philosophy of Political Ideology], Kyiv, Tsentru uchbovoyi literatury, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology*, New York, Published by Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 94-98.

<sup>11</sup> Yaroslav Dashkevych, *Ukrayina u vohni ideolohiy* [Ukraine in the Fire of Ideologies], in Kis' Roman, *Final Tret'oho Rymu (Rosiy's'ka ideya na zlami tysyacholit')* [Kis Roman, The Final of the Third Rome (Russian idea at the turn of the millennium)], Lviv, Publishing House of the Basilian Fathers “Missionary”, 1998, p. XI.

In particular, a conceptual revision of the fundamental paradigms of all social life and, above all, the paradigms of ideological knowledge is inevitable. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to solve the following problems. First, the problems of identifying socio-cultural origins led to the need to form and develop ideology. They later began to determine changes in its role and functions in society. In this case, it becomes natural to turn to ideological archetypes—secondly, the problems of causes and consequences of actualizing factors of ideological order. Addressing the specifics of the functioning of mass consciousness contributes to understanding this problem.

Furthermore, thirdly, the problems of realization of life – a historical substrate, not theoretical constructions – is the leitmotif of all of Mannheim's research.<sup>12</sup> K. Mannheim singled out two critical aspects of the concept of “ideology”: partial and total. Partial ideology expresses the ideas and perceptions of the individual regarding his position in society. Total ideology is the ideology of an epoch or class, the study of which is the sociology of ideological guidelines and concepts in modern society in the context of the formation of the individual's spiritual world.<sup>13</sup> Developing his social theory in the spirit of liberalism, K. Mannheim left aside such an important issue as the influence of national spiritual factors on forming a national (state) ideology. The position of K. Mannheim in this context was rather one-sided. And, as an example of more thorough thinking, one should cite the opinion of the famous Ukrainian scientist Y. Rymarenko that the “national spirit” is the leading and sometimes the only indicator of a nation. Therefore, one should proceed from the fact that one of the most effective forms of expressing the “national spirit” is the national ideology.<sup>14</sup>

For Ukraine, the transformation of the Russian imperial tradition into the ideology of Bolshevism had a significant negative context. And here, an important methodological aspect should be noted since the search-cognitive paradigm of this study provides, first of all, a dialectical approach to the analysis of ideological processes. The main sign of ideology – dogma – arises from the absolutization of ideological schemes and their transformation into values in themselves, covering all other social values. This specificity of ideology makes other alternatives impossible and suppresses personal self-awareness. The main direction of the Russian imperial tradition was manifested in expansion against

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<sup>12</sup> Olga Zazdravnova, *Ideologiya evolyutsioniruyushchem sotsiume* [Ideology of an evolving society], dissertatsiya na soiskaniye uchenoy stepeni doktora filosofskikh nauk, spetsial'nost': 09.00.03 [Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, specialty: 09.00.03], Kharkiv, 2002, p. 51-52.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, Psychology Press, 1991, p. 49.

<sup>14</sup> Yuriy Rymarenko, *Natsional'na samovidomist': vykhid u praktyku Etnonatsional'nyy rozvytok Ukrayiny: terminy, vyznachennya, personaliyi* [National self-consciousness: putting into practice Ethnonational development of Ukraine: terms, definitions, personalities], Kyiv, Naukova dumka, 1993, p. 73-80.

Ukraine. At the same time, state ideology played a significant role. In particular, this was most noticeable during Bolshevism's suppression of the Ukrainian national ideology.

In general, the studying the transformation of Bolshevism from a class ideology to an imperialist ideology is a topical issue, especially if we consider the threat to Europe from modern Russian neo-imperialism. Due to the versatility of the topic of the article, we do not pretend to provide exhaustive information.

### **THE ORIGINS OF THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL TRADITION. THE CONCEPT OF "MOSCOW – THE THIRD ROME"**

In the second half of the 15th century, after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the fall of Constantinople, Moscow Rus remained the last independent country in the Orthodox world, which gave rise to the idea of Moscow's spiritual dominance.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the ideological project "Moscow – the Third Rome" was formed, embodied in the imperial tradition.

As E. Smith noted, in spiritual terms, the Moscow state was the reduction of Byzantium and the Kyiv state. The conquest of the Turk of Byzantium allowed them to create his image of the "last bastion of true faith". Consequently, the Moscow rulers purposefully adopted Byzantine court ceremonies and symbols. Moreover, the idea of Orthodox Moscow was gradually formed as a peculiar "third Rome".<sup>16</sup> The idea of the "Roman kingdom", set forth by the Moscow Orthodox ideologist Philotheus (Rus. Filofei) of Pskov, was used to confirm this. He argued that after the decline of Ancient Rome and Byzantium, which were the bearers of the idea of an ideal kingdom, the image of the "Roman kingdom" should have passed to the Moscow kingdom. At the same time, the "Roman Kingdom" as an ideal kingdom was considered in the context of combining the Christian religion with state power.<sup>17</sup> It should be taken into account the remark of M. Heller regarding the fact that the political concept of the Moscow autocracy and – "Moscow – the Third Rome" originated in monasteries. Under the conditions of the Tatar "yoke", they were the only place of knowledge and were

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<sup>15</sup> Oleksander Sytnyk, *Protystoyannya ukrayins'koyi ta moskovs'koyi seredn'ovichnykh ideolohichnykh tradytsiy* [Confrontation of Ukrainian and Moscow medieval ideological traditions], in "Istorychna pam'yat": naukovyy zbirnyk ["Historical memory", a scientific collection], Vol. 37, Poltava, 2017, p. 44-45.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations. The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant, and Republic*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008, p. 88-90.

<sup>17</sup> Oleksander Sytnyk, *Formuvannya ta evolyutsiya ideolohichnykh kontseptsiy natsional'no-derzhavnyts'koho spryamuvannya v Ukrayini (vid pochatku XIX st. – do 1939 r.)* [Formation and Evolution of Ideological Concepts of Nation-State Orientation in Ukraine (from the Beginning of the 19th Century to 1939)], Donetsk, Nuolidzh, 2009, p. 117-118.

the centers of political and spiritual life.<sup>18</sup> However, in the process of confrontation with the despotic “yoke”, these centers gradually became not only and not so much the spreaders of Christianity but the actual cells of the formation of monarchical despotism.

From the moment Moscow was declared a state, active work began forming a particular perception of the new power in society. Most important in this process was the tendency to present power as “sacred”. Thus, the “Moscow – the Third Rome” concept was formed. Later it became the ideological weapon of Russian imperialism.

With the help of church reform, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich sought to implement the project of creating a single Orthodox empire. At the same time, the Moscow state needed to legitimize its power. For this, an attempt was made to refer to the legacy of Genghis Khan, which was the reason for the first conquests. However, later the Orthodox Church took over this role. Her religious exaltation and xenophobia soon transformed into megalomania. Since according to Alain Besançon, the small and insignificant Moscow principality proclaimed itself the “Third Rome”. As the Church identified itself with the state, along with the cult of the true God, idolatrous self-admiration, the cult of Russianness, began to be born. What constituted religion began to take on the features of the state. Furthermore, the state is gradually identified with religion.<sup>19</sup> As M. Heller rightly noted, the Church needed Moscow as a stronghold of Orthodoxy. Therefore, the Church supported the policy of the Moscow princes in every possible way. In turn, the Moscow rulers needed a church to legitimize their power.<sup>20</sup> In the formation of the Muscovite state, the idea of the “third Rome”, taken from the heritage of Byzantium, began to be identified with state omnipotence. At the same time, Moscow placed itself above Constantinople.

According to J. Østbø, the myth of Moscow as the Third Rome is considered a rather striking example of the desire for ideologically motivated expansion. Ideologically, this was inherent not only in Russia but also in the Soviet Union.<sup>21</sup> This tendency was manifested first in Bolshevism and later transformed into neo-imperialism. Its essence lay in the despotic oppression of its own people and external expansion.

Modern Russian scholars tend to associate the ideology of “Moscow is the Third Rome” with the idea of a messianic pan-Orthodoxy and derive this ideological and political doctrine from the history of the Orthodox Church. It is also emphasized that the idea of Moscow as the third Rome became the leading

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<sup>18</sup> Michel Heller, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>19</sup> Alain Besançon, *Les frontières de l'Europe*, in Chantal Delsol, Jean-François Mattéi (Ed.), *L'identité de l'Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, 2010, pp. 78-79.

<sup>20</sup> Michel Heller, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

<sup>21</sup> Jardar Østbø, *The New Third Rome: Readings of a Russian Nationalist Myth*, Stuttgart, “Ibidem” Publishing House, 2016, p. 54-55.

ideology of Muscovite Russia.<sup>22</sup> However, according to R. Kis, the doctrine of Moscow – the “Third Rome” essentially contradicted even the principles of the Russian messianism promoted by it. Since these principles only formally had signs of universality. In practice, the monk Philotheus of Pskov, in his concept of “Moscow – the Third Rome”, attempted not so much to connect himself with the world as an attempt to dissociate himself from the world, to be constituted in his self-sufficiency. Thus, Moscow placed itself above Constantinople and even broke with it.<sup>23</sup> If, during the formation of the Muscovite state, Muscovites borrowed from the heritage of Byzantium the idea of the “third Rome”, that is, state omnipotence. Ukraine-rus highlights the ideology of the “Second Jerusalem”, the holy land.

On the contrary, “Holy Rus’” is becoming a priority in Ukraine. This ideology subsequently contributed to the development of the problem of spiritual reason in Ukrainian literature. It was not about the intellect but about the rational soul, feeding on the “inner word” of the heart (Theodosius Pechersky), “intellectual love” (Grigory Konissky), or the wisdom of the “inner man” (Grigory Skovoroda). As a result of such an understanding, there was no sharp gap in the Ukrainian mentality between intellect and feeling, between spirit and body, faith and the rational sphere, which caused the tragic duality of man in Western European spirituality. Moreover, the 17th-century Metropolitan of Kyiv, Isaiah Kopinsky, even stated: “The mind is higher than faith because it leads to faith”.<sup>24</sup>

Calling itself Russia or Great Russia, Muscovy thereby sought to establish itself as the heir and successor of Kievan Rus’. With this, the Kremlin authorities tried to prove their right to “gather Rus’ lands”. As a result, the formation of the Moscow state began, and later the Russian Empire.

### **IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN UKRAINE DURING THE PERIOD OF MAJOR LIBERAL REFORMS IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY**

After Alexander II, brought up in a liberal spirit, came to the Russian throne in 1855, the problem of urgent reform of the entire state-legal system arose. After all, this was dictated by the need to catch up with the more developed West, especially in political and legal terms.

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<sup>22</sup> Sergey Levitskiy, *Ocherki po istorii russkoy filosofii* [Essays on the history of Russian philosophy], Moskva, Kanon, 1996, Vol. 1, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> Roman Kis', *Final Tret'oho Rymu (Rosiy's'ka ideya na zlami tysyacholit')* [The Final of the Third Rome (Russian idea at the turn of the millennium)], L'viv, Vydavnytstvo ottsiv Vasyliyan “Misioner”, 1998, p. 185-186.

<sup>24</sup> Serhiy Kryms'kyy, *Pid syhnaturouy Sofiyi* [Under the Signature of Sofia], Kyiv, Vyd. dim “Kyyevo-Mohylyans'ka akademiya”, 2008, p. 293.

At this time, the territory of Ukraine was divided between the Russian and Austrian empires. Thanks to Western influences, Ukraine was better positioned to implement liberal reforms. Even that part of it, which was part of the Russian state, was distinguished by significantly developed relations in most areas of socio-political and economic life. The process of national revival since the end of the 18th century contributed to the formation of the identity and consolidation of the Ukrainian nation. In the middle of the 19th century, this process acquired the character of a national liberation movement.

Moreover, the national aspirations of the Ukrainians were combined with similar beliefs of the Poles in the course of opposition to Russian imperialism and nationalism, which was especially noticeable in the Right-bank part of Ukraine. After all, it was there that the Poles were a significant national minority. The stay of Ukrainians and the Poles in the Russian state provided the best opportunities for the development of the Ukrainian national revival. Thus, several scientists and public and political figures of Polish origin (V. Antonovich, V. Lypynsky, and others) not only defended the rights and interests of Ukrainians but also contributed to developing their national consciousness and identity. In turn, the Russian intellectual elite (even of a liberal persuasion) put their imperial interests above all else.

An example of this was the role of P. Valuev, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian state at the beginning of liberal reforms. In the government, he was considered a moderate reformer – a liberal. Despite this, the activities of P. Valuev were aimed at destroying the Ukrainian national identity, which, first of all, manifested itself in the preparation of the so-called Valuev circular of 1863, which significantly limited the functioning of the Ukrainian language. Moreover, Valuev received support from representatives of the Russian intelligentsia, who were concerned about the start of the Polish uprising in 1863. Even more negative consequences had the adoption in 1876 of the Ems Decree. Its author was the Russian Emperor Alexander II, who initiated liberal reforms. This decree was aimed at the complete displacement of the Ukrainian language from the public and the cultural sphere. Thus, the policy of Russian imperialism was characterized by the desire to destroy Ukrainian national identity.

One of the serious problems of that time in the Russian state was political radicalism. It became a significant factor in slowing down the process of further reform in the countryside and caused a political reaction in the 1880s – 1890s. The rapid intensification of revolutionary terrorist activity was observed precisely after the liberal reforms of the 1860s. The evolutionary reform of the existing feudal system was not part of the plans of the radical Narodniks and other political movements because their goal was a revolutionary change. Furthermore, the inconsistency of the liberal reformism of the 1860s and 1870s contributed to the expansion of the social base of the opposition forces. After the suppression of the revolutionary, terrorist actions of the populists, the government of Alexander III began a frank reaction. Moreover, in the 1880s –

1890s, many counter-reforms were carried out, which to a certain extent, crossed out the liberal reforms and returned some pre-reform orders, and, in turn, was an essential condition for subsequent revolutionary events at the beginning of the 20th century.

All attempts to counteract the spread and activation of revolutionary parties and movements were either ineffective or incomplete. Also unsuccessful were their attempts to reform tsarism to prevent revolutionary shifts. Moreover, the assassination of P. Stolypin in 1911 opened the way for Bolshevism to seize power. P. Stolypin was considered one of the most progressive state and political figures in Russia; at the same time, he was a Russian nationalist. For him, Ukrainians, Jews, and other national minorities of the empire were strangers. Nevertheless, the main problem of Stolypin, as well as of all power in the Russian state, was that they were between two more radical political forces: the chauvinists and the socialists. And this, according to S. Bulgakov, was the result of the lack of a full-fledged national identity<sup>25</sup>.

Deformed by corruption and embezzlement, the merging of bourgeois entrepreneurs with the state apparatus, the Russian military-political system on the eve of and during the First World War was stagnant. The royal family only tried to hide or downplay these manifestations in every possible way. For many Russian patriotic nobles, this situation was unbearable. As a result, the most active supporters of radical change among the military nobility decided to join the Bolsheviks. Since they saw in the revolutionary government a new imperial force capable of creating a more efficient centralized state-legal system and forming a new ideology to replace the outdated "Orthodoxy - autocracy - nationality". Many talented and determined generals and officers consciously joined the Red Army, where they began to occupy the highest command posts, which, in turn, allowed the Bolsheviks to crack down on external and internal opponents. Moreover, later, the same fate awaited the noble officers, who could not understand in time the insidious and self-devouring essence of Bolshevism. But at the same time, Bolshevism received significant basis and support for its transformation from a class ideology into an imperialist ideology.

### **THE STATE OF THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITY IN CONDITIONS OF THE INCREASED INFLUENCE OF THE BOLSHEVIST IDEOLOGY**

The subject of the influence of the Bolshevik ideology on the Ukrainian identity within the Soviet Union is quite widely represented in historiography.

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<sup>25</sup> Sergey Bulgakov, *Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo (Iz razmyshleniy o religioznoy prirode russkoy intelligentsii)* [Heroism and asceticism (From reflections on the religious nature of the Russian intelligentsia)], in "Vekhi - Iz glubiny" ["Milestones - From the depths"], Moscow, Pravda, 1991, p. 65.

Summarizing its main aspects, we should first note the works that reveal the origins and preconditions of Soviet totalitarianism.

P. Shtepa cited some testimonies from foreign authors about the imperial nature of the power of the Kremlin regime. He, in particular, changed the name “monarchism” to “Bolshevism”. However, at the same time, he did not change his primary goal – to impose his ideas about the social and political structure of the whole world.<sup>26</sup> According to P. Shtepa, Marxism was based not only on materialism. Thanks to Marxism, Moscow’s tsarism was transformed into Bolshevism. Furthermore, the myth of the Moscow rulers about the “Third Rome” turned into the myth about the “Third International”. Instead of the Third Rome, the Bolsheviks created the Third International, and it was the Third International that inherited many signs of the Moscow Third Rome. He became the personification of not an international but a national Moscow idea, the embodiment of the old Moscow messianism.<sup>27</sup>

R. Brzeski expressed the opinion that the Bolshevik government tried in a certain way to restore some of the attributes of the Russian Empire. So, the Bolsheviks sought to replace Orthodoxy with their quasi-religion – communism. On this basis, they built a new imperial ideology. One of its fundamental principles was that “workers of all countries unite”. It was in it that the main goal of Bolshevism was expressed – the creation of a world empire of “proletarians” with a center in Moscow.<sup>28</sup> The idea of a world revolution has become one of the most pressing topics among Bolshevik ideologists. At the same time, they were ready to sacrifice national traditions and interests.

According to N. Berdyaev, Bolshevism was the third emergence of Russian great power and imperialism (after the Muscovite kingdom and the Petrine empire). He advocated a strong and centralized state. And in the very essence of Bolshevism, there was a combination of the will to social truth with the will to state power. The latter turned out to be stronger, which made Bolshevism a powerful militarized force.<sup>29</sup> S. Lenkavsky noted that traditional Russian despotism was preserved in the form developed by Lenin, the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Tsarist state centralism transformed into the Russian interpretation of Stalin’s federation of republics of the USSR, which was permeated with party Bolshevik ideology. At the same time, Russian messianism manifested itself in Soviet claims to “protect the world proletariat”. Russian

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<sup>26</sup> Pavlo Shtepa, *Moskovstvo* [Muscovite], Drohobych, Vidrodzhennya, 2000, p. 272-273.

<sup>27</sup> Idem, *Ukrayinets' i moskvyn: dvi protylezhnosti* [Ukraine and Muscovite: two dimensions], Drohobych, Vidrodzhennya, 2008, s. 203.

<sup>28</sup> Roman Bzhes'kyy, “*Bila knyha*”. *Natsional'na i sotsial'na polityka sovyetiv na sluzhbi moskovs'koho imperializmu* [“White Paper”. National and social policy of the Soviets in the service of Moscow imperialism], Kyiv, Ukrayins'ka vydavnycha spilka, 2008, s. 34-36

<sup>29</sup> Nikolai Berdyaev, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

imperialism continued in the Soviet imperialist plans for a world proletarian revolution and a world communist state. Furthermore, Great Russian patriotism was replaced by “Soviet patriotism”.<sup>30</sup> Gradually, the separation of Bolshevism from the theory of Marxism increased. The Bolsheviks’ declaration of the “right of nations to self-determination” was, in reality, replaced by a determination to form a “united Soviet people”.

According to J. Baberowski, from the very beginning, the Bolshevik experiment was based on ideological promises.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, according to the eyewitness of those events, V. Volin, the Bolsheviks were not even going to fulfill them. Moreover, they quickly subjugated to their harsh dictatorship, the mass of the population that brought them to power.<sup>32</sup> Having seized power, the Bolsheviks presented terror and violence as state policy. Instead of a despotic autocracy, their leader, Lenin, began to form a Soviet authoritarian system in the former Russian Empire.

In his “April Theses”, V. Lenin laid down the ideological program of the Bolsheviks. It provided for constructing a “commune state”, the nationalization of land, and the creation of Soviet farms. In his works rather primitively and schematically, Lenin interpreted the course of history: the bourgeois revolution is the first stage of the revolution, after which the dictatorship of the proletariat should follow, which, in turn, should initiate the construction of a classless society.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the schematic approach in history determined the purpose and meaning of social development. Often even Lenin’s opponents began to think in terms of the bourgeois and proletarian revolution. Significant masses of the population became dependent on the primitive populism of Lenin.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the populism of the Bolsheviks, in the form of their massive propaganda and agitation, had a claim to the status of trans ideology, with the further aim of preparing for the world revolution. And in this context, Ukraine has traditionally been seen as a resource and human base for successfully implementing these plans.

Separately, we should consider the state of the Ukrainian national-political identity in the context of strengthening Bolshevism. For example, S. Plokhly

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<sup>30</sup> Stepan Lenkavs'kyi, *Natsional'na polityka bol'shevykiv v Ukrayini* [National Policy of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine], in *Ukrayins'kyi natsionalizm. Tvory v 2-kh tt.* [Ukrainian Nationalism. Works in 2 vol.], O. Sych (red.), Vol. + 2, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Lileya-NV, 2003, p. 41.

<sup>31</sup> Jörg Baberowski, *Der rote Terror: Die Geschichte des Stalinismus*, Frankfurt am Main, Fischer, 2007, p. 99-103.

<sup>32</sup> Vsevolod Volin, *Neizvestnaya revolyutsiya* [Unknown revolution. 1917 - 1921], Moskva, NPTS “Praksis”, 2005, p. 137-138.

<sup>33</sup> Vladimir Lenin, *Izbrannyye sochineniya* [Selected works], Vol. 7, Moskva, Politizdat, 1985, p. 258.

<sup>34</sup> Christoph Lindenberg, *Die Technik des Bösen: Zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*, Stuttgart, Verlag Freies Geistesleben, 1979, p. 39-40.

considered Ukraine's hybrid national policy of Bolshevism. In his opinion, this manifested itself in the form of national communism. Ukrainian national communists became one of the tools of the Bolsheviks in the power struggle.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, the Bolsheviks used the policy of indigenization to strengthen their power in the USSR. The leaders of the Bolshevik Party viewed nationalism as a natural stage in the development of human society. Therefore, they were convinced that the people of the USSR should be allowed to pass this stage as quickly as possible.<sup>36</sup>

In general, the national question was one of the most controversial issues in the politics of the Bolsheviks. The process of indigenization was only one link in the overall plan for building an imaginary communist society. Furthermore, the political direction of national communism, in our opinion, has become an integral part of the populist trans-ideology of Bolshevism.

The policy of indigenization gave impetus to the process of "Ukrainization" in the 1920s. Z. Antonyuk points out that at that time, representatives of the national communist elite demanded to replace the concept of "Ukrainization" with the term "de-Russification". Since, in the opinion of these figures who carried out the "Ukrainization", the situation was not to replace Russian with Ukrainian but to remove Russian imperial stratification from Ukrainian identity.<sup>37</sup> However, the leaders of Bolshevism miscalculated this. Indeed, in many national outskirts of the former Russian Empire, manifestations of the opposition have already acquired signs of a national liberation movement. First of all, this took place in Ukraine. However, during the 1920s, these anti-communist movements were brutally suppressed. Consequently, national communism remained one of the main problems of Bolshevism.<sup>38</sup> National communism in Ukraine could not create a separate ideological trend or a specific political force. The National Communists, unlike the Bolsheviks, could not achieve significant ideological influence on the masses and enlist their support. The Ukrainian nation at that time mainly consisted of peasants. And as S. Kulchitsky rightly notes, for the Ukrainian peasants, the main goal was land ownership.<sup>39</sup> Thus, social ideas and economic factors were more attractive to the

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<sup>35</sup> Serhii Plokyh, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, New York, Basic Books, 2015, p. 231.

<sup>36</sup> Serhii Plokyh, *Lost Kingdom. A History of Russian Nationalism from Ivan the Great to Vladimir Putin*, New York, Basic Books, 2017, p. 234-238.

<sup>37</sup> Zynoviy Antonyuk, *Konspekt samousvidomlennya* [Synopsis of self-awareness], Part 2, Kharkiv-Kyyiv, Dukh i litera, 2007, p. 60.

<sup>38</sup> Andreas Kappeler, *Nerivni braty. Ukrayintsi ta rosiyany vid seredn'ovichchya do suchasnosti* [Unequal brothers. Ukrainians and Russians from the Middle Ages to the present], Chernivtsi, Knyhy - XXI, 2018, p. 196.

<sup>39</sup> Stanislav Kulchytsky, *The Russian Revolution of 1917: A New Look* [The Russian Revolution of 1917: A New Look], Kyiv, Nash Chas, 2008, p. 60-61.

Ukrainian peasantry than the prospects for developing a national identity, which is precisely what the Bolsheviks were able to use. At first, they seized the initiative to influence the peasantry in the Ukrainian Social Revolutionary Party. Later, the Bolsheviks managed to neutralize the National Communists as well.

The so-called "Ukrainization" was of a formal nature. The Bolsheviks used it primarily to distract nationally conscious Ukrainians from the struggle for their own state. Consequently, "Ukrainization" actually turned out to be a cover for the anti-Ukrainian policy of the Bolsheviks. Since the late 1920s, the Bolshevik regime has intensified the fight against "local nationalism" which meant the destruction of those minor manifestations of Ukrainian national identity that were already developing during this period. As a result, conditions were created for further planting the "Russian World" in Ukraine and the deformation of Ukrainians' cultural and national identity, which continued the policy of cultural discrimination against Ukrainians that once took place in the Russian Empire. However, during the 1920s and early 1930s, the Ukrainian nation experienced much more repressive pressure from the Bolsheviks. In this regard, the Bolshevik totalitarian regime surpassed the imperial autocratic regime. At the same time, the Bolsheviks also sought to oppress the national identity of Ukrainians. Thus, the Bolsheviks used communist ideas only as a front for their imperial aspirations. Ukrainians and other peoples of the former Russian Empire were responsible for ensuring this policy.

The particular danger of Bolshevism was that it became the ideology of the geopolitical dimension. It was aimed at destroying spiritual and national shrines and an experiment with humanity that has never been seen before in history. In particular, a mechanism was launched to create a macro-model of economic, financial, and political withdrawal from the geopolitical game of the Russian state. Furthermore, the means of this was the revolutionary seizure of political power. In this situation, Ukrainians' national-political identity was also destroyed.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Starting from the 15th century, the ideological basis of the imperial tradition began to form in the Muscovite state. Moreover, at the end of the 17th century, the formation of the Russian Empire itself began. Its creation took place at the expense of neighboring territories. One of the most critical components of this empire was Ukraine. Thus, many Ukrainians (first of all – spiritual leaders, scientists, and military men) became essential support for strengthening the imperial state. But, at the same time, the native language of Ukrainians was one of the primary means of preserving their own identity. Therefore, Ukrainians have always defended their right to their language. However, since the second half of the XVIII century, Ukrainians began to be subjected to systemic Russification in the Russian Empire. This problem became especially acute in the

19th century on the Ukrainian lands that were part of the Russian Empire. In the second half of the XIX century, the imperial policy of Russian imperialism aimed to destroy the Ukrainian national identity.

During the XIX – early XX centuries, the Russian state established itself as a despotic empire, which set itself the main task – the oppression of neighboring peoples. The Russian Empire was also characterized by the desire to realize its imperial goals in almost any part of Europe and Asia. However, she could not achieve noticeable success because of her problems: the feudal-serf system, the autocratic-despotic nature of power, and the bureaucratic corruption apparatus. The backwardness and corruption of the autocratic monarchy became especially noticeable during the Russo-Japanese and World War I periods. As a result of the February Revolution and the Bolshevik putsch, the decline of the Russian Empire began.

Nevertheless, the Bolshevik regime that emerged in its place only continued the policy of neo-imperial expansionism. The victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia was a natural result of the moral and spiritual degradation of the royal elite, headed by Emperor Nicholas II. During the civil war unleashed by the Bolsheviks, the process of creating states on the territory of the former Russian Empire began. The expanses of the empire, freed from the tsarist autocracy, were filled with new state formations, which were formed by various national and semi-national (for example, Cossack) movements. The Ukrainian People's Republic, which was formed during this period, became an alternative to the Russian imperial tradition and the ideology of Bolshevism. However, the absence among patriotic Ukrainians of a single constructive and consolidating ideological concept aimed at protecting national interests led to the defeat of the Ukrainian People's Republic.

The transformation of Bolshevism from a class ideology into an imperialist ideology naturally led to the strengthening of the aggressive policies of this regime. And at the same time, Russian expansionism was clearly directed against Ukraine. Although for the sake of objectivity, it should be recognized that many other peoples and nations suffered from Russian imperialism and its Soviet incarnation. Russian imperialism sought the destruction of Ukrainian national identity. The Bolshevik regime acted more insidiously. Initially, he declared the equality of nations and their full development. Nevertheless, having received full power in the country, the Bolsheviks introduce total terror and genocide against national minorities. This practice occurs even in our time on the part of Russian neo-imperialism, making it one of the biggest threats to the democratic, civilized world.

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