

BOLSHEVISM, FROM CLASS IDEOLOGY TO IMPERIALIST IDEOLOGY. THE UKRAINIAN CASE*

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Abstract: *The article examines how Bolshevism transitioned from a class ideology to an imperialist ideology with particular emphasis on the Ukrainian context. The authors analysed the essence of the Russian autocratic state as a despotic empire. Since one of Russian imperialism's primary objectives was to maintain control over Ukraine, the Bolshevik regime maintained its neo-imperial expansionist policies. Particular attention was paid to the formation of the Ukrainian national-political identity in the context of Russian (Soviet) imperialism. In terms of totalitarianism, the Bolshevik regime far exceeded the imperial autocratic regime and strove to obliterate as much of Ukrainian national identity 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 dintr-o ideologie de clasă într-o ideologie imperialistă, în cazul special al Ucrainei. Autorii analizează esența statului autocratic rus, considerând că aceasta a fost imperială, despotică. O atenție deosebită este acordată formării identității național-politice ucrainene sub imperialismul rus (sovietic). Regimul bolșevic a depășit regimul autocratic imperial în materie de totalitarism. În același timp, bolșevicii au căutat să distrugă pe cât a fost cu putință identitatea națională a ucrainenilor.*

INTRODUCTION

The shift of Bolshevism from a class ideology to an imperialist ideology marked a significant turning point in the history of the 20th century. This was particularly relevant for Ukraine. Since the end of the 19th century, Russia has witnessed the rise of Bolshevism as an opposition party to the Russian autocracy. 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 into an extreme, misanthropic type of totalitarianism. Ideology, propaganda, and many myths played a decisive role. The latter was closely linked to communist ideology. Bolshevism restored the autocratic policy of despotism, great-power chauvinism, Russification, and several other instruments for denationalizing national minorities as part of its authoritarian strategy. The Bolsheviks could take advantage of the country's military-political, socio-economic, and spiritual crises. At the same time, they increasingly expanded their sphere of influence on the population of the former Russian Empire, which was especially evident in ideological and agitation propaganda.

HISTORIOGRAPHY AND METHODOLOGY

The construction of various ideologemes and ideological systems is often based on subjective or non-essential reasons. At the same time, various kinds of myths are constantly employed, which significantly harms the historical process. A more equitable attitude would be for ideology to be grounded on constructive socio-political and socio-cultural systems, principles, and ideas. Exploring the formation of totalitarian ideologies, Hannah Arendt characterizes them as the result of the mythologization of mass consciousness. At the same time, totalitarian movements rely on broad appeal, and countries with a large population are most suited to them.¹ Notably, Russia, a large country with ancient despotic traditions, has evolved into such a totalitarian regime. Then it spread to the neighbouring 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

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

its dual nature. After all, it is both a Russian and national phenomenon and, simultaneously, a global one. At the same time, knowledge of Marxism cannot help in understanding the national foundations of Russian communism and its determinism in Russian history.² Firstly, it was the Russian people's lengthy stay in serfdom, as well as other factors, most notably the influence of Asian despotism, that shaped the Russian mentality. They provided a solid foundation for the rise of Bolshevism.

Michel Heller's perspective on the political concept of Moscow autocracy arising in Orthodox monasteries in the context of conflict with the despotic Asian 'yoke' is relevant to highlight at this point. Nevertheless, it was from this Asian Horde tradition that the Muscovite state borrowed many features. This is particularly accurate when considering the autocratic style of administration and the policy of expansion, which began with the concept of 'Moscow – the Third Rome'.³

As Oleh Bagan noted, Joseph Stalin, the Bolshevik leader, perfectly translated Peter I's vision into the reality of the 20th century replacing the traditions of patriarchal Russia with active cooperation with the West. Adopting the technological merits of the West, the Bolsheviks sought to westernize the Russian state consciousness. However, they continued to stand by communism's utopian and fundamentally pro-Russian imperial ideals⁴, which created a unique symbiosis between Russia's patriarchal traditions and its imperial drive.

Robert Service described the origin of communist doctrine in Europe and Russia before 1917. The communists claimed that only they had the doctrinal and practical potential to change society radically.⁵ At the same time, the Bolshevik revolution, and the formation of the communist system in the territory of the former Russian Empire, signalled the birth of a totalitarian regime.

Totalitarianism, as opposed to democracy, is a multifaceted phenomenon, according to Vlad Gafița. At the same time, certain types of totalitarianism (left and right) show signs of mutating democracy.⁶ There has been a recurrent trend of

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

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

⁴ Oleh Bahan, *Istoriosofs'ki ese* [Historiosophical Essays], Ternopil', Vydavnytstvo "Kryla", 2021, p. 181.

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

⁶ 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.

democracy devolving into an authoritarian (despotic) regime since ancient Greece. 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 was primarily exhibited via the oppression of national minorities. In particular, this took place in the manifestations of Chauvinism. Thus, the national question was one of the most sensitive and pressing issues in Russian society. This was particularly noticeable on the outskirts of the Empire.

According to Craig 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 diminishes the importance of all other identities. Such statements are made not only by nationalists and by other ethnopolitical players but also by the whole spectrum of Western historical and sociological studies.⁷ As a result, nationalist ideology, and the process of creation of a nation impacted the Ukrainian intellectual legacy to a certain extent.

The nation concept functioned as a type of state religion, acting as a 'cement' that tied citizens to the state and allowed it to directly address them on issues about religion, nationalism, and above all – class. Because they were unrelated to the state and defended entirely different interests, 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 isolated unconstitutional states understood that it was politically constructive to address citizens in accordance with a national idea, such as democracy. However, at the same time, it avoided the risks that democracy entails.

Along with this, there were calls for citizens to obey the authorities following the will of God. Thus, 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.⁸ At the same time, in the second half of the 19th century, science became another pillar of the ideology of progress while 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. The intellectual atheism of a significant part of the population gradually acquired the features of militant atheism. A new

⁷ Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 36.

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

revolutionary ideology based on materialistic philosophy was increasingly conquering the world. At the same time, the old ideology of national liberation fell noticeably into decline. The ideology, which in the Middle Ages was predominantly religious, gradually acquired a secular character.

The intense attack against religion in Western Europe has been generally paired 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 not so critical. However, the so-called 'progressive' forces (materialists, socialists, Marxists) were atheists who saw evil in religion and the church. Such an ideological confrontation between 'progressive' and conservative forces was not clearly expressed until 1917. However, it has subsequently evolved into an open uncompromising struggle. Among its significant consequences was the emergence of that inhumane system, which, with the help of populism, demagogy, 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 Karl 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 unify and serve as an instrument of social control, ensuring approval and submission.⁹

According to Mannheim, ideologies appear and become dominant 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.¹⁰ Karl Mannheim sought to trace the dynamics of ideological content across history. He, in particular, concluded that reality distortion occurs throughout all stages of ideology formation and functioning. Accordingly, none of the social groups has objective truth, and ideology does not contain such truth. Because the ideological process does not result in the purification of human knowledge from error, the criteria of truth and untruths do not apply to it. According to the scientist, truth is

⁹ Fedir Kyrlyuk, *Filosofiya politychnoyi ideolohiyi* [Philosophy of Political Ideology], Kyiv, Tsentru uchbovoyi literatury, 2009, p. 15.

¹⁰ Karl Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Social Psychology*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1953, p. 94-98.

an attribute of an object that does not depend on the forms of involvement of this object in cognitive procedures: truth is represented by a fundamental process of knowledge. Therefore, Yaroslav Dashkevich believes that Karl Mannheim rejected Marx's identification of ideology with false consciousness and emphasized the functions of ideology and its efforts to protect the existing system.¹¹

According to Olga Zazdravnaya, the appeal to the phenomenon of ideology in our time requires a revision of the deep foundations of human social existence. 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 difficulties in identifying socio-cultural origins prompted the formation and development of ideology. They later began to determine changes in its role and functions in society. In this case, it is natural to turn to ideological archetypes. Second, the issues related to the causes and consequences of revising ideological variables. Exploring the intricacies of how mass consciousness functions helps to understand this challenge.

Furthermore, thirdly, the issues of life's fulfilment – a historical substrate, rather than theoretical constructions – constitute the leitmotif of all of Mannheim's research.¹² Karl Mannheim singled out two critical aspects of the concept of 'ideology': particular and total. Particular ideology expresses the ideas and perceptions of the individual regarding his position in society. Total ideology is the ideology of an epoch or a class, the study of which is the sociology of modern society's directions and concepts in the context of the formation of the individual's spiritual world.¹³ Mannheim disregarded a key issue in developing his social theory in the spirit of liberalism: the effect of national spiritual factors on the formation of a national (state) ideology. The position of Karl Mannheim in this context was rather one-sided. In addition, as an example of more thorough thinking, one should cite the opinion of the Ukrainian scientist Yuriy Rymarenko that the 'national spirit' is the leading and sometimes the sole indicator of a nation. Therefore, one should proceed from the fact that one of the most effective forms

¹¹ 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')* [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.

¹² Olga Zazdravnova, *Ideologiya v evolyutsionuyuchomu sotsiumi* [Ideology in an evolving society], dissertatsiya na soiskaniye uchenoy stepeni doktora filosofskih nauk, spetsial'nost': 09.00.03 [Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophical Sciences, specialty: 09.00.03], Kharkiv, 2002, p. 51-52.

¹³ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, London, Routledge, 1991, p. 49.

of expressing the 'national spirit' is through national ideology.¹⁴

The transformation of Russian imperial tradition into Bolshevism ideology had a profound negative context for Ukraine. An essential methodological point should be made here because the search-cognitive paradigm of this study first provides a dialectical approach to the analysis of ideological processes. The most visible manifestation of ideology is dogma, which results from the absolutization of ideological schemes and their transformation into values themselves, including 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 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, studying the transformation of Bolshevism from a class ideology to an imperialist ideology is a timely topic, especially given the threat posed by modern Russian neo-imperialism to Europe. Due to the versatility of the topic, this research does not engage in providing exhaustive information.

THE ORIGINS OF THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL TRADITION. THE CONCEPT OF 'MOSCOW – THE THIRD ROME'

After the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the fall of Constantinople in the second half of the 15th century, Moscow Rus remained the last independent country in the Orthodox world, which gave rise to the idea of Moscow's spiritual dominance.¹⁵ Therefore, the ideological project 'Moscow – the Third Rome' emerged, rooted in the imperial tradition.

According to Anthony Smith, the Moscow state was a spiritual reduction of Byzantium and the Kyiv state. The conquest of Byzantium by the Turks allowed them to secure its reputation as the 'last bastion of true faith'. Consequently, the Moscow rulers deliberately adopted Byzantine court ceremonies and symbols.

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

¹⁵ 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.

Furthermore, the idea of Orthodox Moscow as a unique 'third Rome'¹⁶ evolved gradually. The concept of the 'Roman kingdom' advanced by Philotheus of Pskov (Rus. *Filofei*), the Moscow Orthodox ideologist, was used to substantiate that. He argued that after the decline of Ancient Rome and Byzantium, the bearers of the ideal kingdom concept, the image of the 'Roman kingdom' should have passed on to the Moscow kingdom. At the same time, the 'Roman Kingdom' was viewed as an ideal kingdom in terms of integrating Christian religion with state power.¹⁷ Michel Heller's observation that the political concept of the Moscow autocracy and – 'Moscow – the Third Rome' originated in monasteries should be taken into account. They were the only source of information and the centre of political and spiritual life during the Tatar "yoke."¹⁸ However, in the process of confrontation with the despotic 'yoke', these centres gradually became not only and not so much spreaders of Christianity but genuine foundations of monarchical despotism.

From the moment that Moscow became a state, active work began to shape society's perception of the new power. The tendency to depict authority as 'sacred' was especially essential in this process. Thus, the 'Moscow – the Third Rome' concept emerged. Later it became the ideological weapon of Russian imperialism.

Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich sought to accomplish the goal of creating a unified Orthodox empire with the support of church reform. At the same time, the Moscow state needed to legitimize its power. This was an attempt 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, according to Alain Besançon, after the small and insignificant Moscow principality proclaimed itself the 'Third Rome'. Along with the cult of the true God, the church's identification with the state saw the rise of idolatrous self-admiration and the religion of Russianness. What used to be defined as religion became an element of the state. As a result, the state gradually fused into religion.¹⁹ As Michel Heller rightly noted, the Church

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

¹⁷ Oleksander Sytnyk, *Formuvannya ta evolyutsiya ideolohichnykh kontseptsiy natsional'no-derzhavnyts'koho spryamuvannya v Ukraini (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.

¹⁸ Michel Heller, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

¹⁹ Alain Besançon, *Les frontières de l'Europe*, in Chantal Delsol, Jean-François Mattéi (Eds.), *L'identité de l'Europe*, Presses Universitaires de France, 2010, p. 78-79.

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.²⁰ 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 Jardar 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.²¹ This tendency manifested first in Bolshevism and later 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. Moscow as the Third Rome became the prevailing ideology of Muscovite Russia.²² However, according to Roman Kis, the doctrine of 'Moscow – the Third Rome' essentially contradicted even the principles of the Russian messianism promoted by it because these principles only formally featured signs of universality. In practice, the monk Philotheus of Pskov's concept of 'Moscow – the Third Rome', aimed to dissociate from the world in self-sufficiency, rather than take part in it. Thus, Moscow placed itself above Constantinople and even broke with it.²³ While Muscovites adopted the notion of a 'third Rome', that is, state omnipotence, from Byzantium during the formation of the Muscovite state, Ukraine-Rus' promoted the ideology of the 'Second Jerusalem', the holy land.

On the other hand, 'Holy Russia' has turned into a primary concern in Ukraine. This ideology subsequently led to the spiritual mind issue 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

²⁰ Michel Heller, op. cit., p. 248.

²¹ Jardar Østbø, *The New Third Rome: Readings of a Russian Nationalist Myth*, Stuttgart, "Ibidem" Publishing House, 2016, p. 54-55.

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

²³ 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 otsiv Vasyl'yan "Misioner", 1998, p. 185-186.

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”.²⁴

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 MAJOR LIBERAL REFORMS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY

The issue of urgent reform of the entire state's legal system arose in 1855, with the accession of Alexander II, a liberally inclined ruler, to the Russian throne. After all, this was required by the need to catch up with the more developed West, especially in political and legal terms.

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 the part of Ukraine that belonged to the Russian state had significantly developed relations in most aspects of socio-political and economic life. Since the end of the 18th century, the process of national revival has contributed to the formation of an identity and the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation. This process acquired the features of a national liberation movement by the middle of the 19th century.

Moreover, the national aspirations of the Ukrainians combined with similar beliefs of the Poles during 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 (including liberals) placed imperial interests above everything else.

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

Petr Valuev, the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Russian state at the beginning of liberal reforms, was such an example. He was seen as a moderate reformer – a liberal, in the administration. Despite this, the activities of Petr Valuev were aimed at destroying Ukrainian national identity, beginning with the preparation of the so-called Valuev circular of 1863, which significantly limited the use 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. The purpose of the decree was to remove the Ukrainian language from the public and the cultural sphere. Consequently, Russian imperialism's approach has been defined by its determination 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 and terrorist actions of the populists, the government of Alexander III launched a direct response. Moreover, many counter-reforms were carried out in the 1880s – 1890s, which to a certain extent, overturned the liberal reforms and restored some pre-reform orders, which proved 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 Petr Stolypin in 1911 opened the way for Bolshevism to seize power. Stolypin was considered one of the most progressive state and political figures in Russia; at the same time, he was a Russian nationalist. Ukrainians, Jews, and other empire national minorities were foreign to him. Nevertheless, the main problem of Stolypin, as well as of all power in the Russian state, was that they were caught between two more radical political forces: the chauvinists and the socialists, and this, according to Sergey Bulgakov, was the result of the lack of a

full-fledged national identity²⁵.

On the eve of and during the First World War, corruption and embezzlement, as well as the merger of bourgeois businesses with the state machinery deformed the Russian military-political system. 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. 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 suppress both 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. At the same time, Bolshevism obtained a solid foundation and support for its shift from a class ideology to an imperialist ideology.

THE UKRAINIAN NATIONAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITY UNDER THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF THE BOLSHEVIK IDEOLOGY

The influence of the Bolshevik ideology on the Ukrainian identity within the Soviet Union is quite widely represented in historiography. Summarizing its main aspects, it is essential to note the works that reveal the origins and preconditions of Soviet totalitarianism.

Pavlo 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.²⁶ According to Pavlo 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'

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ Pavlo Shtepa, *Moskovstvo* [Muscovite], Drohobych, Vidrozhennya, 2000, p. 272-273.

turned into the myth about the 'Third International'. Instead of the Third Rome, the Bolsheviks created the Third International, which absorbed many aspects of the Moscow Third Rome. It became a manifestation of the old Moscow messianism, not an international but a native Moscow ideology.²⁷

According to Roman Brzeski, the Bolshevik government tried in a certain way to restore some of the attributes of the Russian Empire. 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 centre in Moscow.²⁸ 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.

As stated by Nikolai 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.²⁹

Stepan Lenkavsky noted that traditional Russian despotism was preserved in the form developed by Lenin, the doctrine of proletarian dictatorship. Tsarist state centralism transformed into the Russian interpretation of Stalin's USSR federation, which was infused with party Bolshevik ideology. At the same time, Soviet pledges to "protect the world proletariat" reflected Russian messianism. Russian 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'.³⁰ Gradually, the separation of Bolshevism from the theory of Marxism increased. The Bolsheviks' declaration of the "right of nations to self-determination" had been, in reality, replaced with a

²⁷ Idem, *Ukrayinets' i moskvyin: dvi protylezhnosti* [Ukraine and Muscovite: two opposites], Drohobych, Vidrozhennya, 2008, s. 203.

²⁸ Roman Brzeski, *'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.

²⁹ Nikolai Berdyaev, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³⁰ Stepan Lenkavskyy, *Natsional'na polityka bol'shevykiv v Ukrayini* [National Policy of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine], in Stepan Lenkavskyy, *Ukrayins'kyi natsionalizm. Tvory v 2-kh tt.* [Ukrainian Nationalism. Works in 2 vol.], Vol. 2, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Lileya-NV, 2003, p. 41.

commitment to form a 'united Soviet people'.

According to Jörg Baberowski, from the very beginning, the Bolshevik experiment was based on ideological promises.³¹ Moreover, according to the eyewitness of those events, Vsevolod Volin, the Bolsheviks were not even going to fulfil them. Moreover, the mass of the population that brought them to power was rapidly subdued by their ruthless rule.³² Having seized power, the Bolsheviks made terror and violence official state policy. Instead of a despotic autocracy, their leader, Lenin, attempted to establish a Soviet authoritarian system in the former Russian Empire.

Vladimir Lenin outlined the Bolsheviks' ideological program in his "April Theses." It called for the establishment of a 'commune state', the nationalization of land, and the creation of Soviet farms. Lenin interpreted the course of history in his works rather primitively and schematically: the bourgeois revolution is the first stage of the revolution, followed by the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, in turn, will initiate the creation of a classless society.³³ Thus, throughout history, the schematic approach set the purpose and meaning of social development. 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.³⁴ As a result, the Bolshevik populism in the form of massive propaganda and agitation claimed the status of trans ideology, with the further aim of preparing for the world revolution. In this context, Ukraine has long been viewed as a resource and human base for effectively achieving these goals.

Separately, the situation of the Ukrainian national-political identity in the context of the rise of Bolshevism should not be overlooked. Serhii Plokhyy investigated Ukraine's Bolshevik hybrid national policy. This, in his opinion, presented itself as national communism. Ukrainian national communists became one of the Bolsheviks' instruments in the power struggle.³⁵ At the same time, the Bolsheviks used the policy of indigenization to strengthen their power

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

³² Vsevolod Volin, *Neizvestnaya revolyutsiya* [Unknown revolution. 1917 – 1921], Moskva, NPTS "Praksis", 2005, p. 137-138.

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

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

³⁵ Serhii Plokhyy, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, New York, Basic Books, 2015, p. 231.

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 through this stage as quickly as possible.³⁶

In general, the national question was one of the most controversial issues in Bolshevik ideology. The process of indigenization was merely one component of a larger scheme to construct an imaginary communist society. Furthermore, the political view of national communism, in our opinion, has become an integral part of Bolshevism's populist trans-ideology.

The strategy of indigenization fuelled the 'Ukrainization' process in the 1920s. Zynoviy Antonyuk points out that at that time, representatives of the national communist elite requested that the concept of 'Ukrainization' should be replaced with the term 'de-Russification', because, in the opinion of those who carried out the 'Ukrainization', the issue was not merely replacing Russian with Ukrainian but removing Russian imperial strata from Ukrainian identity.³⁷ However, Bolshevik leaders miscalculated this. Indeed, in many national outskirts of the former Russian Empire, manifestations of the opposition have already acquired the traits of a national liberation movement. First, this took place in Ukraine. However, during the 1920s, these anti-communist movements were brutally suppressed. Consequently, national communism remained one of Bolshevism's major challenges.³⁸

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. At the time, the Ukrainian nation mainly consisted of peasants. As Stanislav Kulchitsky rightly notes, land ownership was the main interest of Ukrainian peasants.³⁹ Thus, social ideas and economic factors were more attractive to the Ukrainian peasantry than the prospect of creating a national identity, which is precisely what the Bolsheviks were able to exploit. At first, they

³⁶ Idem, *Lost Kingdom. A History of Russian Nationalism from Ivan the Great to Vladimir Putin*, New York, Basic Books, 2017, p. 234-238.

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

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ Stanislav Kulchitsky, *Rosiy's'ka revolyutsiya 1917 roku: novyy pohlyad* [The Russian Revolution of 1917: A New Look], Kyiv, Nash Chas, 2008, p. 60-61.

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 formal. 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 its fight against 'local nationalism', which destroyed modest manifestations of Ukrainian national identity that had emerged during this time. As a result, conditions were created for the further development of the 'Russian World' in Ukraine, as well as the deformation of Ukrainians' cultural and national identity, perpetuating the policy of cultural discrimination against Ukrainians that once took place in the Russian Empire. However, the Bolsheviks exerted far more oppressive pressure on the Ukrainian nation during the 1920s and early 1930s. In this regard, the Bolshevik totalitarian regime surpassed the imperial autocratic regime. At the same time, the Bolsheviks sought to crush the national identity of Ukrainians. Thus, the Bolsheviks employed communist ideology primarily as a cover for their imperial aspirations. Ukrainians and other peoples of the former Russian Empire were recipients of this policy.

The particular danger of Bolshevism was that it became the ideology of the geopolitical dimension. It was an experiment with humankind never witnessed before in history, aimed at destroying spiritual and national shrines. More specifically, a mechanism was launched to create a macro-model of economic, financial, and political separation from the geopolitical game of the Russian state. Furthermore, this was accomplished through the revolutionary seizure of political power. In this set of events, the national-political identity of Ukrainians was also destroyed.

CONCLUSIONS

The ideological foundation of the imperial tradition began to evolve in the Muscovite state in the 15th century. Built at the cost of neighbouring territories, the emergence of the Russian Empire itself originated around the end of the 17th century. One of the most critical components of this empire was Ukraine. Many Ukrainians, such as spiritual leaders, scientists, and military men became essential supporters of the imperial state's defence. At the same time, the native language of Ukrainians was one of the primary means of preserving their own identity; Ukrainians have always defended their right to their language. Ukrainians were

subjected to systemic Russification in the Russian Empire beginning in the second half of the 18th century, with the most intense Russification occurring in the 19th century in Ukrainian regions that were part of the Russian Empire, whose policy in the second half of the 19th century was to erase Ukrainian national identity.

During the 19th – early 20th centuries, the Russian state established itself as a despotic empire, with the primary goal of oppressing surrounding peoples. Distinguished by its determination to achieve its imperial objectives in nearly any corner of Europe and Asia, it did not achieve noticeable success because of issues such as the feudal serf system, the autocratic-despotic nature of power, and the bureaucratic corruption apparatus. The backwardness and corruption of the autocratic monarchy became most visible during the Russo-Japanese War and World War I. After the February Revolution and the Bolshevik putsch, the Russian Empire began to fall apart.

Nevertheless, the Bolshevik regime that replaced it 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, led 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, founded by various national and semi-national (for example, Cossack) movements. During this time, the Ukrainian People's Republic emerged as an alternative to Russia's imperial legacy and Bolshevism's ideology. However, the lack of a unified constructive and integrating ideological concept aimed at protecting national interests among patriotic Ukrainians 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. At the same time, Russian expansionism was clearly directed against Ukraine, although, for the sake of objectivity, it should be said 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. Having achieved complete control over the nation, the Bolsheviks enforced absolute terror and genocide against minorities despite their original claims of national equality and progress. This practice occurs even in our time on the part of Russian neo-imperialism, making it one of the most serious threats to the democratic, civilized world.

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