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PERSONALITY FORMATION IN THE 1960s–1980s: THE SOVIET RUSSIFICATION POLICY

Abstract. *In the article there have been defined the Russification processes influence, in particular, the prerequisites and the consequences for the Soviet personality formation. The party nomenclature made an attempt to transform the Soviet citizen's consciousness of that time owing to the policy of the so-called "education of the masses". The total Russification, linguistic and cultural transformations and the leveling of the national achievements of the peoples of the Ukrainian SSR led to a complete breakdown of the individuals' consciousness. The Soviet ideologists imposed a new reality on the population. Hence, the study on the language issue is of the utmost importance. Since Russian acquired the status of the "language of all-Union communication", fluent proficiency and, accordingly, its learning opened up certain prospects for the population. There was the transformation regarding the national identity of the population of the Soviet Ukraine as a result of the Russification processes spread in the scientific and educational sphere. The above-mentioned trends only intensified due to the emergence of television and radio broadcasting. Owing to television and radio broadcasting, it became much more convenient to control the consciousness of the broad masses. The above-mentioned state of affairs led to an inferiority complex appearance among the ethnic groups, who were living in the territory of the Soviet Union of that time. Such trends had a particularly negative impact on the Ukrainians' self-identification manifestations, who were forced to adapt to the new reality. Any manifestations of the Ukrainian linguistic, cultural and national identity were equated with the "bourgeois nationalism" and pluralism of opinions under the new conditions of existence, which further only increased the pressure of the party nomenclature on the Ukrainian-speaking population of the republic. Hence, the study on the Russification processes influence on the formation of a new type of personality in the Soviet Ukraine in the 1960s–1980s is topical.*

The issue on the Ukrainian people's national identity transformation requires further in-depth analysis under the conditions of the modern Russo-Ukrainian War. In this context, the study of Russification as a key factor in the breakdown of Ukrainian identity acquires significant importance.

Keywords: *ideologist, individual, language and cultural policy, personality, Russification.*

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ФОРМУВАННЯ ОСОБИСТОСТІ

У 1960–1980-х рр.: РАДЯНСЬКА РУСИФІКАЦІЙНА ПОЛІТИКА

Анотація. У пропонованій статті визначено передумови та наслідки впливу русифікаційних процесів на формування радянської особистості. За допомогою політики так званого «виховання мас» партійна номенклатура намагалася трансформувати свідомість тогочасного радянського громадянина. Тотальна русифікація, мовно-культурні трансформації та нівелювання національних здобутків народів УРСР призводили до цілковитого зламу свідомості індивідів. Радянські ідеологи нав'язували населенню нову реальність. У цьому контексті досить важливим є дослідження мовного питання. Оскільки російська набувала статусу «мови всесоюзної комунікації», вільне володіння та відповідно її вивчення, відкривало для населення певні перспективи. У результаті поширення русифікаційних процесів у науково-освітній галузі відбувалася трансформація національної ідентичності населення Радянської України. Поява телебачення та радіомовлення лише посилювала вищезазначені тенденції. Адже за допомогою телерадіомовлення керувати свідомістю широких народних мас стало набагато зручніше. Такий стан речей спричиняв появу комплексу меншовартості в етнічних груп, що проживали на території тогочасного Радянського Союзу. Особливо негативно такі тенденції позначилися на проявах самоідентифікації українців, які були змушені пристосовуватися до нової реальності. В нових умовах існування, прояви української мовно-культурної та національної ідентичності прирівнювалися до «буржуазного націоналізму» та плюралізму думок, що надалі, лише посилювало тиск партійної номенклатури на україномовне населення республіки. Таким чином, дослідження впливу русифікаційних процесів на формування нового типу особистості в Радянській Україні 1960–1980-х рр. є досить актуальним.

В умовах сучасної російсько-української війни, проблема трансформації національної самосвідомості українського народу потребує подальшого ґрунтовного аналізу. В цьому контексті вагомим значення набуває дослідження русифікації, як ключового чинника зламу української ідентичності.

Ключові слова: ідеолог, індивід, мовно-культурна політика, особистість, русифікація.

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The personality formation and the imposition of certain behavioral models became one of the key features of the Soviet cultural and ideological work. The Communist Party referred to this process as the “education of the masses”, which involved altering the traditional worldviews, unifying the linguistic and cultural traits of the ethnic groups, and integrating individuals into the political and linguistic cultural space of the Soviet society.

The Russification was one of the methods used to influence the individual’s consciousness. The idea regarding the Russian or Russian-speaking population superiority and its uniqueness was promoted actively and asserted among the broader population, while the other ethnic groups were developing a sense of inferiority. The Russification became an efficient tool for transforming both public consciousness and individual worldviews during the period under study. The above-mentioned process had a significant impact on the national identity formation, and its consequences could be

seen in the study on the language issues in the independent Ukraine. It is crucial to analyze thoroughly the process of the personality formation within the context of the Soviet language policy in order to understand the causes and consequences of the contemporary political processes in Ukraine.

There were diverse scholars, who were interested in the “Soviet person” image formation, including Yu. Kahanov (Каганов, 2019), Yu. Kolisnyk (Колісник, 2015), O. Lavrut (Лаврут, 2021), V. Molotkina (Молоткіна, 2022) and the others. The scholars focused on the methods of influencing the public’s consciousness while covering the above-mentioned issue. The Soviet authorities, leveraging administrative resources, disseminated the Communist Party ideology among the masses effectively, influencing both the public consciousness and the national identity. According to Yu. Kolisnyk, mass media, in particular the magazines, played a significant manipulative role in forming the individual consciousness. The media were entirely controlled by the Soviet authorities (Колісник, 2015). The process of “educating the masses” was examined thoroughly in Yu. Kahanov’s monograph “Forming the “Soviet Person” (1953–1991): The Ukrainian Version”. The scholar identified the Russification as one of the key methods in forming the image of the “Soviet person” (Каганов, 2019). The following scholars studied the language policy impact on both societal and individual consciousness: V. Molotkina (Молоткіна, 2022), N. Novorodovska (Новородовська, 2020; Новородовська, 2021), and M. Yarmolenko (Ярмоленко, 2013) and the others. Certain parallels between the Soviet Russification policy and the modern Russian-Ukrainian war are reflected in the works of Ukrainian scholars. (Галів, Ільницький, 2023; Галів, Ільницький, Карпенко, 2024; Глібошук, Ільницький, Старка, 2022; Ільницький, Старка, Галів, 2022). There was covered not only the impact of the Russification on everyday life in the Ukrainian SSR but also how it altered the identity transformation in the above-mentioned studies. The transformation of individual, demographic group, and societal worldviews was also studied by the foreign scholars. B. Silver argued that the Russification was one of the mechanisms on mobilization and integration within the Soviet society. The scholar believed that the spread of the Russification tendencies led to some changes regarding the personal reception of reality (Silver, 1974). The publications of Mykola Haliv and Vasyl Ilnytskyi are of theoretical and methodological importance for our research (Ilnytskyi, Haliv, 2022; Haliv M., Ilnytskyi, 2023; Haliv, Ilnytskyi, 2021). To our mind, the Soviet language policy served as a mechanism for reforming the public consciousness and, consequently, developing a new image of the “Soviet person”.

The purpose of the research is to study the impact of the language policy in the 1960s–1980s on the personal transformation, the formation of the image of the “Soviet person”, and the national identity transformation in Soviet Ukraine.

The ideologists set out to change the individual, compelling them to forget their native linguistic, cultural, and everyday traditions and adopt the new ones, justifying this as a sign of “freedom” of the contemporary Soviet citizen since the beginning of the Soviet Union formation. This linguistic and cultural policy aimed to reduce pluralism (i.e., to unify the society) and, thus, prevent the emergence of the alternative ideas about state and social development. The process of transforming individuals in a totalitarian/authoritarian society was reinforced by coercive methods. The instinct for self-preservation was triggered, prompting individuals to adapt to the new realities of the Soviet life under such conditions. However, despite these efforts, the Soviet ideologists ultimately failed to completely break individuals, impose a new worldview, or eradicate existing ideas, traditions, language, and culture.

The Soviet government aimed to finalize the unification of the society by implementing policies that sought to merge nations into a supranational entity – “the Soviet people” during the period of the 1960s–1980s. It was required to alter the collective consciousness of the population through the ideological influence on individuals. In fact, the interference in the scientific, educational, and cultural spheres involved the complete elimination of the national characteristics. As a result, there was a complete breakdown of consciousness and the formation of a new supranational community – the

“Soviet people” due to the limitation of the role of the individual and imposing the Communist Party principles, in particular, those related to critical thinking and self-identification. Taking into account the art, the Soviet authorities took a full control of artistic associations, educational institutions, and sculptors, forcing them to work only in the socialist realist style (Хахула, ЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, 2021: 245–246). During the period of the 1960s–1980s, the historical and pedagogical narrative emphasized the concepts such as “friendship of nations”, “internationalism”, and “patriotism”. The Soviet scholars justified these ideas based on “Lenin’s national policy” (Галів, ЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, 2021: 53). In general, the concept of “patriotism” was used with the meaning of “Soviet”. Any expression of the local patriotism was recognised as hostile and labelled as the “bourgeois nationalism” (Лаврут, 2021: 331). In fact, the party’s ideological apparatus promoted the idea of equality among all Soviet peoples and their supposed friendship, while the declared right to self-determination remained a fiction. At the same time, in the educational sector, teachers were given a task to raise a “Soviet individual”, who conformed to specific behavioral and cognitive models. During the “Thaw” period, the focus was on fostering a sense of collectivity, but by the 1970s–1980s, this emphasis weakened due to declining liberalization and increasing social crises (Галів, ЛЬНИЦЬКИЙ, 2020: 66). Furthermore, the national identity was considered to be as a potential threat to the Communist ideology, prompting the Party leadership to curtail these tendencies in education.

The above-mentioned trends in education sphere were systemic. They aimed at creating a new generation that would embody the Soviet identity along with the Russification of schools. In the Ukrainian SSR, this process was significantly more intense than in other republics, revealing the Communist Party’s determination to eradicate any expressions of the national self-identification.

In 1959, the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR adopted the “Law on Strengthening the Connection Between School and Life and Further Development of the National Education System in the Ukrainian SSR”, based on a similar legislative act passed by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in 1958. This law legalized the complete Russification of education, as Russian became the primary language of communication gradually that all students were required to learn it (Парахіна, 2014: 133). Taking into consideration the career and personal prospects for their children, numerous parents chose consciously the Russian as the language of instruction (Молоткіна, 2022: 91). Such kind of tendency was particularly evident in large cities and industrial regions of the Ukrainian SSR. During the period of the 1960s and 1980s, the schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction disappeared in some cities. Accordingly, there was a sharp reduction in the number of the Ukrainian-language schools, especially in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (Новородовська, 2020: 17). As a result of the Party’s anti-Ukrainian policies in education, the entire republic underwent the process of mass Russification. The statistical data from 1959 to 1989 indicated that the percentage of the Ukrainians considering the Russian as their native language increased from 6,45% to 12,24% (Новородовська, 2020: 17).

The British scholar G. Hosking argued that the above-mentioned law was intended to intensify Sovietization, and Russification served as just one of its elements (Хоскінг, 1994). It should be noted that the “Sovietisation” and the “Russification” implied the transformation of an individual’s identity from non-Russian to Russian, based on shared linguistic and cultural features common to all peoples of the USSR (Silver, 1974).

By the early 1960s, the Soviet government presented assimilation as the voluntary desire of non-Russian peoples to learn and communicate in Russian. Due to this narrative parents rejected Ukrainian or other native languages in education, considering those languages as unpromising, lacking future prospects. Consequently, the Soviet language policy contributed to the undermining of the concept of a native language in public consciousness (Ярмоленко, 2013: 367).

Due to the intensification of the Russification in education, the ideological burden on school students also increased. The teachers were responsible not only for the direct education of the youth but also for acting as the communist ideologues, serving as intermediaries between the party and

their students. The teachers and lecturers of educational institutions were often deprived of the freedom of speech and had to follow strictly the official instructions at the lessons. Any manifestations of dissent, especially the spread of the nationalist, that is, the age-old traditions of the peoples residing in the territory of the Ukrainian SSR, led to discontent and significant resistance from the republic's leadership. Therefore, it can be argued that education workers not only performed their direct professional duties but also influenced the Soviet person formation. There were the following integral parts of their activities: the educational institutions, which became elements of the socialization of a younger generation, and ideological work, including the Russification (Лаврут, 2021: 105).

There were imposed new values and behavioral stereotypes due to the total Russification of the Soviet society, under these conditions such negative phenomena occurred as denunciations, rejection of one's own identity, mercantilism, atheistic sentiments in society, and inferiority complexes, which often concerned linguistic issues. The Soviet authorities exerted the greatest influence on the population's linguistic identity in the South and East of the Ukrainian SSR. This situation could be explained by several factors: mass labour migration to industrial areas, increased urbanization, a significant share of the Russian population in the region, and a deliberate Soviet leadership policy aimed at the Russification of educational sphere. In contrast, linguistic and national identity was traditionally to a greater extent preserved in rural areas of the southern and eastern regions of the Ukrainian SSR (Новородовська, 2021: 56). However, a gradual urbanization contributed to the outflow of the young people to cities and their subsequent shift to using the Russian language both in everyday life and business communication. Other regions were able to preserve their linguistic and cultural traditions, which somewhat slowed down the pace of the Russification. There was virtually no effect of the Russification in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR.

A whole network of agitators was formed in order to have influence on the consciousness of the Soviet people totally. Their main task was to ensure the population's loyalty to the Soviet regime. The issue of spreading the Soviet propaganda was particularly acutely emphasized in the media of the time, which published agitators' speeches frequently calling them to work for the Soviet Union development (Почапська, 2022: 85). In general, mass media played a key role in manipulating the public consciousness. A society with an artificially limited worldview was highly susceptible to the ideological influence from the Soviet media. The media functioned as tools for programming beliefs, ideological attitudes, moral aspirations, spiritual needs, and the mental states of the masses (Колісник, 2015). At the same time, printed publications formed and preserved a set of relevant archetypes. This led to the national identity loss, the imposition of a new historical memory, and the suppression of critical thinking skills and needs, ultimately fostering a population incapable of independent thought or resistance, prone to conformism, authority dependence, and state paternalism (Каранов, 2019: 166). An individual's worldview narrowed due to the absence of alternative sources of information. As a result, people perceived information provided by the Soviet media as absolute truth, without being able to reflect critically on it. The Russification of the media further reinforced this influence, as it facilitated shifts in the linguistic identity and the traditions of the masses.

Another significant factor that impacted both labour activities and population consciousness at the time was the Komsomol organizations (the Leninist Communist League of Youth). These structural units controlled the moral behaviour of the population and instilled loyalty to the Soviet regime in young people from an early age, starting from their school years. Their ultimate goal was to educate the youth in the spirit of the communist ideology, preparing new cadres for the party positions, among other objectives. There was a structured trajectory from childhood, which helped to form a new personality through public institutions: "Zhovtenia" – "Pioneer" – "Komsomol member" – "Communist Party member". The Russification intensified in the 1970s and

a distinguishing characteristic of the Komsomol and the Communist Party members was their use of the Russian language in official and everyday communication. This process became particularly widespread in Soviet Ukraine following Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi's speech delivered in Russian at the 25th Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine in 1976 (Бажан, 2018). Hence, the above-mentioned marked the establishment of the practice of conducting official Congresses, conferences, and meetings of the Communist Party and Komsomol organizations in Russian.

The emergence of television and radio broadcasting had a significant impact on the Soviet identity formation. In the context of total Russification of the society and the suppression of pluralism of thought, films and radio programmes began to serve as the communist ideology instruments. The Soviet authorities considered television the most important tool for influencing the masses (Mickiewicz, 1988). A significant portion of media content was in Russian. The Ukrainian television remained authentic until 1967 (Каганов, 2019: 213). Most Russian-language programmes, which were broadcast in Ukraine, were translated into Ukrainian (Mickiewicz, 1988). However, from the end of the 1960s, these processes began to reverse: the Russian-language content displaced the Ukrainian-language programmes gradually. Furthermore, less attention was paid to translating the Russian-language programmes and films, while the share of the Ukrainian-language cinema in broadcast time declined. A noticeable advantage of the national language was observed only in radio broadcasting, as most radio network listeners were from rural areas, where the Russification was progressing at a much slower pace (Молоткіна, 2022: 96). However, radio began to lose ground to television, as films and TV programmes provided a visual component. Consequently, it became easier for viewers to perceive information. Nevertheless, visualization deprived individuals of imagination and critical thinking skills, which was undoubtedly beneficial for the Communist Party leadership. In the 1970s and 1980s, television became the primary tool, which helped form the "Soviet person".

Hence, the transformation of value systems, worldviews, and interference in personal space became key attributes of the Soviet domestic policy. The goal of the party elite in the field of ideological indoctrination was to create a unified society in which individuals would abandon their ethnic identity, language, culture, traditions, religion, and etc. In this context, the Russification played a crucial role, encompassing virtually all spheres of life at the time and leading to significant assimilation of the population with a shift in identity. The impact of language policy on individuals began in preschool and school institutions. Overall, the Communist Party leadership considered schools as a vital institution whose task was to educate a new generation, subject it to ideological indoctrination, and socialize it within the Soviet realities. Another key aspect was the dissemination of ideologically charged information aimed at imposing new worldview values, forming historical memory, and erasing the national identity. The Russification of mass media further deepened assimilation and reinforced the understanding that switching to the Russian language was essential for career and personal advancement – thus, fostering increased conformity among broader population. The consequences of these transformations remain evident even at the current stage of building an independent Ukrainian state.

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