

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE CIVIC IDENTITY OF THE BUKOVINIANS: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE 20th – BEGINNING OF 21st CENTURIES

NATALIYA NECHAIEVA-YURIICHUK

Departamentul de Științe Politice și Administrație Publică, Universitatea Națională
„Yuriy Fedkovych”, Cernăuți/Ucraina
E-mail: NataliyaNY77@gmail.com

Transformarea identității civice a bucovinenilor: experiența secolului al XX-lea – începutul secolului al XXI-lea

*(Rezumat)**

În cercetarea sa, autoarea examinează particularitățile proceselor socio-politice din Bucovina (în primul rând, ale părții ei de nord) din secolul al XX-lea – începutul secolului al XXI-lea prin prisma relațiilor reciproce ale acestora cu procesele de formare a identității civice a locuitorilor regiunii. Articolul atrage atenția asupra rolului și semnificației Primului Război Mondial asupra formării identității naționale a ucrainenilor din regiune, activizării mișcării de eliberare națională din regiune. O atenție deosebită este acordată perioadei sovietice, în care s-a efectuat formarea așa-numitul „om sovietic” (Homo Sovieticus), lipsit de sentimentul patriotismului național și care și-a pierdut identitatea națională. Sunt analizate procesele de formare a statului independent ucrainean și relația dintre democratizarea vieții socio-politice și creșterea nivelului de identitate civică. Autorul atrage atenția asupra importanței activităților educaționale pentru dezvoltarea identității civice.

Cuvinte cheie: identitate civică, autoidentificare națională, Bucovina, procese socio-politice.

The peculiarity of modernity is the permanent transformations in all spheres of life, from socio-political to spiritual. The history of human civilization dates back thousands of years, during which the world in which we live today was built. The history of world civilization is full of various events, during which the formation of both personal and collective identity took place. From territorial and religious to civil and political. In this context, in our opinion, the most significant for Europeans was the last century, a time when empires and colonialism in general collapsed, two world wars happened, not to mention the emergence and fall of

* Traducere: Nataliya Nechaieva-Yuriichuk.

totalitarian regimes such as Nazism. It was then, in a short period of time in the historical context, that mankind became both a participant and a witness to the socio-political and socio-economic cataclysms that were inextricably linked: from the Great War to the collapse of the USSR. Among the historical chain of events, a special place belongs to the World War I and the subsequent world economic crisis, the World War II and the subsequent Cold War, the collapse of the colonial and, at the end of the century, the socialist system. Of course, the twentieth century is full of other events of civilizational significance. Moreover, at first glance, it seems that in all these named and unnamed events and processes, a special role belongs to the great countries and political actors. However, according to the author, each figure, regardless of what social position it occupies, plays its role in the common history.

The political transformations that take place in each individual state and the world as a whole affect everyone to one degree or another. This is especially true at the border areas, where residents are often the target of political activity and manipulative technology. Bukovina, divided between two states – Ukraine and Romania, has been the focus of attention of politicians of different states for centuries, and its inhabitants were forced to change their citizenship and state language several times during the twentieth century, while staying on their own land. Therefore, the purpose of this scientific research is to analyze the processes of formation and transformation of civic identity of Bukovinians in the 20th – early 21st centuries.

The end of the eighteenth century was a turning point in the historical development of Bukovina: as a result of the Russian-Turkish wars, geopolitical changes took place and Bukovina became part of the Austrian Empire. From August 1774 (when Austrian troops occupied Chernivtsi) until November 1918, this land was under the rule of the Austrian (since 1867 Austro-Hungarian) monarchy. During this time, radical changes took place here: from administrative-territorial to conscious-spiritual. The latter, in particular, Bukovinian tolerance, is felt today as one of the positive collective experiences of the past.

The historical past of Bukovina is the subject of scientific interest of many researchers both in Ukraine and abroad. At the same time, it should be emphasized that the issue of civic identity, in our opinion, is becoming a subject of not only scientific but also public interest due to its unique practical importance in the face of modern challenges and threats. And a special place in these processes is given to the border areas as territories inhabited by representatives of different ethnic groups, where cultural traditions are closely intertwined and historical stereotypes of some people towards others are preserved and so on.

The state affiliation of Bukovina has changed many times over the last centuries. In fact, the entry of this territory into the Austrian (later, Austro-Hungarian) Empire was the longest since the end of the 18th century. During this time, Bukovina changed its status from the Bukovina District to the crown land of

the empire, which had its own representation in the Reichrat and its own coat of arms. The fact that the transformation of Bukovina into a separate crown land of the empire was accompanied by a constitutional recognition of the equality of the peoples who lived here deserves special attention. In general, evaluating the policy of the Habsburgs in these territories, it is worth emphasizing its positive impact on the formation of civic identity of the population of the region. A little more than a century later, the Bukovinians gained opportunities for practical political realization – representation in the national parliament. The latter opened wide opportunities not only for political enlightenment, but also for the development of national movements in the region, including Ukrainian one.

The twentieth century entered the life of Bukovinians as a time of change and upheaval caused primarily by political activity of global and regional political actors, whose activities were aimed at expanding the sphere of political influence and gaining global or at least regional dominance. The event of world importance, which directly influenced the formation of civic consciousness of the inhabitants of the region, was the World War I, which resulted in radical changes in all spheres of human life, including morality, behavior and consciousness of citizens of different countries. The consequences and results of the World War I are the subject of research by domestic and foreign scientists, while the problem of the impact of the Great War on the socio-psychological state of Ukrainian society, in our opinion, remains an unexplored topic and requires further research. The most complete changes in the psychological mood of Ukrainians during the World War are presented in diaries, letters, postcards, and, of course, in the literary works of participants. Creative personalities were able to convey in vivid literary form the feelings that overwhelmed them in different periods of the war under the influence of different events. That is why we believe that general fiction is one of the most important sources in the study of socio-psychological consequences of the Great War and its impact on the person and the collective consciousness.

Ukrainian writers, authors and poets have repeatedly addressed the topic of the World War I and its impact on Ukrainian society. The spirit of the epoch is felt in their works – the epoch of changes that affected everyone. The actualization of the problem of state self-realization of Ukrainians, which took place during the World War of 1914–1918, was especially acute in the western Ukrainian lands, which were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in particular in Bukovina. The desire for national self-realization was manifested in the creation of the Legion of Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (USS) – a Ukrainian military formation in the Austro-Hungarian army, based on activists of youth organizations such as “Plast”, “Sich” and “Sokil”. The formation of USS units was carried out on a voluntary basis. It should be noted that after the war, the USS not only became the basis for the creation of armed formations of the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic (ZUNR), but also contributed to the formation of national identity of Ukrainians. The great role of the Ukrainian youth organization in the struggle for Ukraine is evidenced not only by

traditional historical sources, but also by literary works, in particular, the poetry of Bukovinian writer Dmytro Makogon, who wrote: “Hey, into the Sich, hey, into the Sich, hey, into the Sich! / Who wants to serve Ukraine / And wipe the tears from the dark eyes of the people, / Hurry under the «Sich»’ flag”¹

At the same time, the explanation of the motives and goals of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen (USS) took place in poetic form, including by Bukovinian poets: “Sich Riflemen are fighters for their land, / For all the family and freedom”² (Osyp Makoviy).

We draw your attention to the fact that many Ukrainian poets and writers glorified patriotism in their works as one of the highest manifestations of love for the Motherland, including paying attention to various informal formations (such as Sich, for example) that helped unite Ukrainians in their struggle for the freedom of Ukraine. Moreover, despite the fact that during the World War of 1914–1918 Ukraine was divided between two empires, love for the homeland in the works of Ukrainian writers is love for Ukraine, not for Russia or Austria-Hungary. The already mentioned Bukovinian poet Dmytro Makogon emphasized: “In a difficult, sunless hour, / In a wave of all enemies’ invasions, / Love, please love Ukraine, / As your best ideal”³.

Further collapse of empires as a result of the World War, the formation of the Versailles-Washington world order, the development of the national liberation movement in the Ukrainian lands became, in our opinion, a kind of foundation for further formation of Ukrainian civic identity. According to the modern Ukrainian researcher Tetyana Bevz, the language, state symbols, and the calendar of holidays⁴ can be considered the main markers of civic identity. In the context of the historical development of events, the civic identity of Ukrainians was formed over a long period of time and the events of the World War and the subsequent Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1920 became a certain (or conditional) starting point. It is then, according to historical sources that Ukrainians actively returned to their native language and culture and an attempt was made to build their own state, which would unite the Ukrainian lands, which were part of different empires at the beginning of the last century.

In the interwar period, Bukovina became a theater of active socio-political events, which were attended by representatives of different nationalities and religions. The period of the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the proclamation

¹ Дмитро Макогон, „Гей, у «Січ»!”, in *Письменники Буковини*, Чернівці, Видавництво «Прут», 2002, р. 485.

² Осип Маковей, „Стрілецький марш”, in *Письменники Буковини*, Чернівці, Видавництво «Прут», 2002, р. 276.

³ Дмитро Макогон, „В тяжку годину”, in *Письменники Буковини*, Чернівці, Видавництво «Прут», 2002, р. 486.

⁴ Тетяна Бевз, „Особливості формування громадянської ідентичності в сучасній Україні”, in *Наукові записки ІПіЕНД ім. І.Ф.Кураса НАН України*, https://ipiend.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/bevz_osoblyvosti.pdf.

of accession to the Western Ukrainian People's Republic during the Bukovinian Council on November 3, 1918, and the subsequent incorporation of Bukovina into the Kingdom of Romania were, on the one hand, a reflection of the mood of the Bukovinians and the world geopolitical situation, and on the other – contributed to the formation of political (and hence civic) identity of the Bukovinians. For a rather short period in the historical dimension, there was an awareness of the importance of the language issue in the process of state formation, not to mention the national factor, state symbols and public holidays.

World War II, the expansion of the USSR and the inclusion of Bukovina in its composition changed the geopolitical configuration in the region. The establishment of Marxism-Leninism as a state ideology contributed to the formation of a new type of citizen, the Soviet man. The so-called *Homo Sovieticus*. For several decades, Russian became the dominant language in the region: in particular, until the end of the 1980s in the city of Chernivtsi only a few schools taught in Ukrainian. In the rest the Ukrainian language was studied as a subject. The holiday calendar was completely changed: such dates as November 7, May 1, and May 9 entered the life of Bukovinians. Instead, religious holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, were removed from the official calendar in the atheistic Soviet Union, and those who dared to celebrate them were persecuted in various forms.

According to the author, the times of Soviet rule in Bukovina were also marked by the politicization of the public consciousness of the population. It is primarily a matter of ideologizing the existence of the Soviet man: any public activity, including scientific, journalistic, literary, etc., had to be “ideologically correct” (in accordance with Marxist-Leninist ideology and the decisions of the CPSU Central Committee). The latter had an ambiguous impact on the population, some people became active participants in building a new “socialist state” and some in fact eliminated themselves, minimizing their presence in the socio-political life of the region by participating in unavoidable events (such as party meetings or meetings of labor collectives, demonstrations etc.).

In general, the policy of the Soviet government was aimed at forming a “new type” of citizens, without class and ethnic attributes and characteristics. Glorifying of the workers and peasants as a state-forming class was often declarative, which was especially evident during the Brezhnev stagnation, when the party's establishment became in fact the dominant class in the so-called proletarian state. However, in this rather short time in history, *Homo Sovieticus* appeared on the socio-political arena: a Soviet man whose participation in modern socio-political processes is destructive, as evidenced by the events of the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine. Deprived of national identity, mentally attached to a non-existing state, *Homo Sovieticus* speaks Russian, attends the Russian Orthodox Church, spreads mythologies created by Moscow's political technologists, and more. *Homo Sovieticus* is set to return to the imaginary “Soviet paradise” that in Ukraine during the Euromaidan was shown by support of Russia's occupation of Crimea and

Russia's invasion of the east of our country, and since proclamation of independence in resistance to change in various forms (from passive boycott to active protest).

We consider it necessary to emphasize that during the Soviet period the Soviet identity of the Bukovinians was formed, but not their civic identity. Over the decades, the people of the region have acquired new competencies in the context of building the Soviet political and cultural space, but have not acquired basic civic competencies, including the ability to “political analysis and judgment” and critical thinking skills necessary for every citizen of a democratic state to carry out “effective civic activity”⁵.

In view of the above, the collapse of the Soviet Union became a catalyst for change not only on the geopolitical map of the world, but also in the worldview of the citizens of the newly proclaimed states, including Ukraine. In general, the proclamation and formation of independence is a complex political process that rarely takes place in a “cotton wool”. In 1991, the year of the proclamation of Ukraine's independence, it seemed that the transition from the position of the subject to the object of politics would take place without socio-political cataclysms. However, the slowness of reforms (or their actual absence) became a defining prerequisite not only for the next socio-political and socio-economic upheavals, but also for the formation of civic identity of Ukrainians, who twice in a short time opposed attempts to establish authoritarianism and destroy the basics of the country's democracy.

1991 was a turning point in the lives of Bukovina residents, who in the majority (over 92%) voted for Ukraine's independence during the referendum of December, 1⁶. The first years of independence of the Ukrainian state were marked by socio-economic difficulties, political challenges and the gradual awareness of the citizens of the state of its independence and autonomy. Bukovinians, as well as residents of other regions of Ukraine, fully experienced the difficulties of this stage of modern history. At the same time, we see a return to historical roots, combined with the return of old historical stereotypes, which, in our opinion, has complicated interethnic communication in the region and, consequently, the formation of a democratic worldview of its inhabitants. However, we consider it necessary to emphasize that, despite the attempts of some radical political forces, Bukovinians worthily passed the test of intolerance and entered the 21st century with the desire to build constructive cooperation and restore the traditions of Bukovinian tolerance. Neighboring Romania's accession to the European Union contributed to the inclusion of Chernivtsi region as a region with a significant percentage of

⁵ Тетяна Ремех, *Сутність і структура громадянської компетентності учня нової української школи*, https://lib.iitta.gov.ua/713638/1/%D0%93%D0%9A_%D1%81%D1%82_%D0%A3%D0%9F%D0%96_18.pdf.

⁶ „20 років референдуму на підтвердження Акту незалежності. Підсумки”, <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/4ed73af88b240/>.

Romanian-speaking population in the implementation of various European programs and projects, intensified cooperation within the triangle Ukraine – Republic of Moldova – Romania and more.

According to the author, in a short period of time we have seen an increase in the level of national self-awareness of the region's residents, as evidenced by statistics (including the 1989 and 2001 censuses) and the presentation of national interests by politicians, public figures, and mediators. A comparative analysis of the results of these two censuses shows a slight increase in the number of Ukrainians (by 3.4%) in Chernivtsi region in 2001 and a significant increase in the number of Romanians – by 14.2%, while the number of representatives of other nationalities (in particular, Moldovans, Russians, Jews, etc.) decreased⁷. Unfortunately, the population census has not been conducted in Ukraine for over 20 years, so the lack of relevant results makes it impossible to carry out a comparative analysis and monitoring of demographic processes in the region. At the same time, the changes in national identity witnessed by the 2001 census were, in our opinion, due to a number of objective and subjective factors, including personal approaches of citizens, return to national cultures, political circumstances, etc. Interstate interaction, socio-economic challenges, and opportunities for personal self-realization also played a role here. However, we believe that a special role in these processes was played by the democratization of socio-political life, which brought to the surface the issues of citizenship, identity, political consciousness and self-awareness. The latter were clearly articulated during the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity, in which the Bukovinians supported the course of Ukraine's European integration. So we can say that democratic citizenship, the concept of which was proposed by the Committee on Education of the Council of Europe in the "Education for Democratic Citizenship" project in 1997⁸, gradually came to life in the region as an unconscious civic practice demonstrated by the unity of conscious Bukovinians in defending the right to freedom and European choice in 2004 and 2013; and as an educational practice implemented through various trainings on responsible citizenship, human and civil rights, etc., as well as reforming the education system in Ukraine, including the introduction of a new Ukrainian school⁹.

During three decades since Ukraine's independence, not only the political background in Bukovina has changed, which determines the direction of the region's development, but also the approaches of the citizens themselves to its formation. We are currently experiencing a period of political and civic interdependence, which is particularly evident in the region bordering both the

⁷ „Всеукраїнський перепис населення 2001. Чернівецька область”, <http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/results/general/nationality/chernivtsi/>.

⁸ Олександр Полтавцев, „Формування громадянських компетентностей в Україні: проблеми та перспективи”, https://www.narodnaosvita.kiev.ua/?page_id=3415.

⁹ „Нова українська школа”, <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/tag/nova-ukrainska-shkola>.

European Union (Romania) and the former Soviet republic (Moldova). Democratic citizenship as a conscious attitude of citizens to their rights and responsibilities has become the basis of educational and cultural-educational activities of many (non-) governmental organizations, which in various forms – from training to performances, disseminate knowledge about citizenship, rights and freedoms of human and citizen, etc. Moreover, textbooks were published in a short time, the purpose of which was to disseminate the necessary knowledge and skills among a wide range of citizens¹⁰.

The events of the Revolution of Dignity and the beginning of Russian aggression in Ukraine were the impetus for the public expression of the civic position of our compatriots. Protecting the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine in modern conditions requires a citizen to be aware of his own civic position and appropriate actions. Not everyone can defend the state with weapons in their hands, so some of our compatriots do it in other ways. There are a number of various volunteer organizations in the Chernivtsi region, which aim to help the military and internally displaced persons, in particular, the Volunteer Movement of Bukovina¹¹. Active educational activities are carried out aimed at disseminating knowledge and assisting various social strata in mastering the basic civic competencies necessary for carrying out, among other things, professional activity for the benefit of individual communities, as well as the region and the state as a whole.

In 2021, with the assistance of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UKF) “Simple Faces of a Difficult Story” project was implemented in Chernivtsi region, intended to solve a number of socially important tasks in a light creative form by cultural means, including: to promote Ukrainian political identity, overcome negative ethno-regional and ethno-historical stereotypes of mutual perception; to promote the integration of representatives of different ethno-national, ethno-confessional, social communities into a single Ukrainian political nation; to draw attention to the problems of regional or national history of a wide range of citizens; and to promote civic activism and community consolidation through involvement of people in the co-creation of cultural products, local and regional history’s writing and promotion. The main idea of the project was to humanize history, to form a view of complex historical and political events through the prism of the individual’s life. The project was implemented by the Public Resources and Initiatives Charitable Foundation in six newly created communities of Chernivtsi region: Chernivtsi, Vyzhnytsia, Hertsaiiv, Kitsman, Storozhynets and Khotyn. The selected communities are a kind of landmark of the region, because people of different nationalities live here, and in some of them representatives of national

¹⁰ Н. Нечасва-Юрійчук, Л. Довган, Н. Малько. *Методичний посібник до програми «Базовий курс ефективного громадянства та комунікації»*, Чернівці, 2019.

¹¹ „ГО «Волонтерський рух Буковини»”, <https://www.prostir.ua/?organization=ho-volonterskyj-ruh-bukovyny>.

communities make up the majority of the population (for example, the majority of the population in the Hertsav community is Romanian). As a result of active work, 180 stories of individuals and families who experienced complex socio-political transformations and cataclysms were collected, six photo exhibitions with photos of these heroes and stories from their lives were prepared and presented, and a book on part of them was published. The advantage of this project was that an electronic version was prepared in the form of the site “Simple Faces of a Difficult Story”, where the user can not only read already collected stories, but also share theirs through the “Add History” section. In addition, 17 video stories were shot, which can also be viewed on the site. This project caused a public response and inclusion in the process of reproducing the history of the inhabitants of the region, regardless of nationality, religion, social status and more. Moreover, in the process of presentations of photo exhibitions, public discussions, and book presentations there were discussions about the historical past of the region, human destiny in history and present, awareness of the importance of civic self-identification for a human and society as a whole.

Thus, from the beginning of the last century to the beginning of the present one Bukovina and Bukovinians experienced a number of tragic and difficult historical events that directly affected the fate of the inhabitants of the region and, accordingly, its development. An important feature of the Bukovinians was that despite political and socio-economic pressure, they managed to maintain a respectful and tolerant attitude towards each other, which is especially important in the hybrid war that Russia is currently waging against Ukraine.