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ORIGIN OF STUDENTS' SECTOR WITHIN UKRAINIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT IN 1917

Дана стаття присвячена дослідженню проблем організації учнівського руху у період після повалення російського самодержавства у 1917 році. Особлива увага приділяється факторам, які впливали на виникнення та становлення організацій учнівської молоді. Аналізуються причини їх різноманіття, масштабності та багатовекторності їх розвитку як за політичними цілями, так і по організаційним принципам. Виділяються специфічні умови життєдіяльності молодшої генерації учнівської молоді перехідного періоду 1917 року, який з одного боку характеризувався консерватизмом в організації навчання, а з іншого – знайомством з новітніми теоріями наукового і соціального розвитку.

Ключові слова: юнацтво, учнівські спілки, організація молодіжного руху.

Данная статья посвящена изучению проблем организации союзов учащихся в период после свержения самодержавия в 1917 году. Основное внимание уделяется факторам, которые влияли на возникновение и становление организаций учащейся молодежи. Анализируются причины их разнообразия, масштабности и разновекторности развития как по политическим целям, так и по принципам организации. Выделяются специфические условия жизнедеятельности молодого поколения учащейся молодежи переходного периода 1917 года, для которого характерным был консерватизм в организации учебы с одной стороны, а с другой – знакомство с передовыми теориями научного и социального развития.

Ключевые слова: юношество, союзы учащихся, организация молодёжного движения.

This article deals with problems of the organizational structure of student unions after the autocracy overthrow in 1917. It focuses on the factors which influenced the emergence and formation of student organizations. The article also gives a detailed analysis of the reasons of their variety, large scale and developmental multi-orientation according to both political goals and organizational principles. It describes specific conditions of activity of the young students' generation during the transitional period of 1917. This period was characterized by conservatism in the organization of the studying process on the one hand and by the introduction of the advanced theories of scientific and social development on the other hand.

Keywords: youth, student unions, organization of the youth movement.

The contemporary period of society progress is characterized by considerable socio-economic difficulties. A large number of economic and political problems are to be solved during the creation of the sovereign Ukrainian state. A burning issue among them is the realization of a right, scientifically grounded youth policy. It is the worldview and the social position of Ukraine's younger generation, their moral and psychological state that the future of our society depends on.

In February 1917 Russian autocracy was overthrown. From this time on, a period of drastic changes in the political structure of the society began. The problem of determining the future state organization became one of the most important for various political forces. Under these conditions political parties intensified their struggle for power attributing it to the «foundation-of-a-new-society» issue.

The majority of Ukrainian lands were part of the Russian Empire. That is why Ukraine was involved in revolutionary events and political changes that unfolded throughout the former tsarist empire after the overthrow of the autocracy. But in Ukraine the process of society development had its own peculiarities.

Due to the peculiarities of historical development, a large number of nations and nationalities lived in this area. The main ones were Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Germans, Poles, and Belarusians. Thus, according to the data provided by the Bulletin of the «Ukrainian House» community, out of 30 million of

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the total republic's population Ukrainians made 74.2 %, Russians – 11.4 %, Germans – 1.9 %, Jews – 7.7 %, Poles – 1.9 % [27, May 25].

The multinational composition of the republic's population, specific features of its socio-economic development affected the formation of a new political structure of Ukraine. This was primarily manifested in the creation of numerous political parties and movements. Before the revolution began, a lot of organizations operated in Ukraine, such as the Brotherhood for Self-determination, the Ukrainian Social Democratic Labor Party (USDLP), the Ukrainian Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and the Society of Ukrainian Progressives (SUP). In addition to the above-mentioned parties, new organizations were founded in the first months after the February Revolution, e.g. the Ukrainian Peasants' Association, the Ukrainian Grain-growing Democratic Party and many others [15, p. 48].

All the parties were trying to get at least some political power and using it to influence the process of building a new state in accordance with their aims and objectives.

After the overthrow of the autocracy in Russia, suitable conditions were created for broad and diverse activities of political parties and movements. World War I greatly aggravated the socio-economic and political problems and contributed to the politicization of all the population strata in Ukraine, their active involvement in the country's political life. These processes affected the youth too.

After the overthrow of the autocracy in 1917 the speed of political changes increased. Under their influence young people joined in the struggle for the establishment of the eight-hour working day, higher wages, the elimination of any national oppression, and for freedom of the national minorities' languages. For example, more than 100,000 students, pupils and young workers participated in the demonstration which took place on April 1, 1917 in Kiev [7, p. 82]. The youth movement influenced more and more the course of political events of the time.

Before the February Revolution various youth communities existed in the Russian Empire. They were also created in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the 20th century clandestine student organizations and unions functioned in Kharkiv, Kyiv, Katerynoslav and other cities of the republic. For example, one of especially popular organizations among young people was the «Youth Union» (YU), which was created by the Congress of the student community in Kharkiv in April 1905 and was under the influence of the SRs [5, p. 19].

In tsarist Russia political oppression of dissidents did not allow for their broad and legal activity. However, the activity of the first youth organizations laid the foundation for the emergence of the youth movement in Ukraine.

Student associations took an active part in the formation of the youth movement in Ukraine. Pupils in pre-revolutionary Russia were a significant part of the country's youth. Thus, the number of students alone (180,000) [6, p.201] was almost twice as big as the number of engineers, doctors, and scientists. Studying in higher or secondary educational establishments this part of youth got into special conditions. Barrack-like atmosphere and prohibition of reading «free» books [13, p.108] on the one hand as well as acquaintance with progressive scientific and social theories on the other hand caused dissatisfaction with the existing system among a large part of students. This contributed to their active involvement in the revolutionary struggle against autocracy. For instance, since the beginning of the 20th century up to 1917 only in Kharkiv there was a significant number of student unions, such as the Kharkiv Pupil Union [5, p. 19], the «Red Star» student group [35, F.10. – Inv. I. – Cert. 202 – L. 1], the Social Democratic Student fraction [35, F.10. – Inv. I. – Cert. 202 – L. 2] etc.

Education concentrated large masses of students in classrooms and lecture halls which resulted in certain isolation from other youth groups. Therefore, the desire to actively participate in public life along with traditions of the revolutionary struggle established by clandestine student unions engendered «a very strong desire to create their own student organizations» [35, F. 10417. – Inv. 4 – Cert. 54 – L. 27]. This process particularly intensified after the overthrow of autocracy due to political liberties. In spring 1917 the «Association of Ukrainian Pupils» was founded in Ukraine, Poltava region. Later it was given a new name of the «Student Association» [28, November 11]. This April the 3rd Student Conference decided on the creation of a student organization «Ukrainian Pupils' Association» [33, April 26]. Student

organizations existed in all major cities and towns of Ukraine. Information about the emergence and operation of student groups and associations occurs regularly in the periodicals of Kyiv, Katerynoslav, Kherson, Poltava and other cities. This fact indicates the scale of the student movement in the country [25, March 21, April 25, May 20; March 19, 24, April 15, 25, June 11, 25, July 4, 9; April 22, 29; April 27, 26].

All these organizations had a variety of tasks. This feature of the Ukrainian youth movement was largely caused by the fact that students at that time formed a complex social structure. According to Leykin A.Y., who conducted research into the emergence of the youth movement, «representatives of the privileged classes made up 57 % of all university students and 41 % of technical school students. Bourgeois, craftsmen and peasants by origin made up 40 % in universities, 82 % in higher technical schools and 93 % in pedagogical institutes and seminaries» [9, p. 31]. Heterogeneity of Ukrainian youth, closely connected with its social groups, their way of life and traditions, was of great importance and had considerable impact on the differentiation of students. University students were divided into three main groups: the bourgeois and landlords, the *raznochintsi* and the proletariat supporters. These groups varied in size and had different impact on the bulk of students. The group of the proletariat supporters was the least numerous. Its representatives advocated the socialist revolution and mainly belonged to the Bolshevik Party. The group which consisted of the bourgeois and landlords played a more significant role in the student movement. This group included representatives of the privileged classes such as the upper bourgeoisie and the landlords. This part of students supported the idea of a bourgeois state and its representatives maintained close contact with the members of various bourgeoisie parties, first of all, with the Kadets. The *raznochintsi* student group was the most numerous and influential one. Its representatives came mostly from different strata of Ukrainian population. They grew up in conditions of political injustice, financial needs, and national oppression. That is why they were closely connected and were under the influence of national intelligentsia and bourgeoisie. Striving for democracy and free personal development as well as the struggle with the remains of national oppression was traditional for this part of the population. These traditions had significant influence on the formation of the students' world view and on the elaboration of organizational principles of youth groups. The *raznochintsi* student group exerted noticeable influence on the development of the youth spirit in Ukraine.

Purely professional organizations of students of higher and secondary educational establishments were created immediately after the overthrow of the autocracy. They did not have their independent political objectives. In most cases, they declared themselves non-party and apolitical. Therefore, they believed that the main task of a pupil or student group was to regulate the academic life [35, F. P-1682. – Inv. 1. – Cert. 20. – L. 54].

The aim of their work was to clarify misunderstandings between professors, teachers and students, to distribute scholarships and classrooms, to send representatives to the Educational Committee, to establish the autonomy of Higher school, and to give civil rights to students regardless of their nationality [35, F. P-1682. – Inv. 1. – Cert. 20 – L. 46].

A typical example of this sector in the Ukrainian youth movement is the student organization of the Kharkiv Institute of Technology. It was founded in March 1917. At the gathering of KhIT students it was decided that «the student organization ... has to pursue academic goals in the first place» [35, F. P-1682. – Inv. 1. – Cert. 20 – L. 46]. The University Monitors' Council was created in order to regulate the student life [35, F. P-1682. – Inv. 1. – Cert. -L. 46, 54 20].

Thus, such student organizations were aimed at the protection of students' rights and interests. Their major drawback was that their work was confined within a single university or school. This led to a certain isolation of this part of the youth from the youth movement in Ukraine as a whole. Connection with other sectors of the youth movement in the republic was characterized as irregular. However, the foundation of student organizations, which protected their interests and were aware of their problems, was defensible. Events that took place after the overthrow of the autocracy resulted in the growing desire among students to unite and create their own all-Ukrainian organization. Therefore, in April 1917 the National Student Conference decided that «it was necessary to establish the All-Ukrainian Student Union» [33, April 26].

Organizations of the educational sector tried to be apolitical and were not guided by any party. The main objective of such groups was to educate young people, to prepare them for conscious and creative work in a free democratic society. Foundation of such organizations was widely supported by a number of all-Russian political parties, e.g. the Mensheviks, the SRs, the anarchists and others. The structure of this sector in the youth movement included people from different social groups. Free admission conditions contributed not only to a significant increase in the number of these groups, but also conditioned their internal instability.

Student associations were relatively closed, because they only accepted the students of the same educational establishment. This led to a certain isolation of this part of the youth from the youth movement in Ukraine as a whole.

Despite a whole number of differences, the common feature for all these sectors was their desire for an all-Ukrainian union. But their different political orientation hindered this process contributing to the struggle for the influence on the younger generation. As a result, this complicated the foundation of all-Ukrainian youth organizations. None of these sectors occupied a prominent place in the Ukrainian youth movement.

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