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FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT**

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SOVIET STATEHOOD OF UKRAINE FROM THE SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECT

*A Sociological Appraisal
of Three Soviet Republics of Ukraine*

By MATTHEW STACHIW

I

The *state* is a socio-political phenomenon. It represents an entirely new and distinct type of social system which differs from the system of the *primitive horde* (which is the first form of social system) and from the *clan-tribal system* (a second stage of social system). The stage grew up on the ruins of the clan-tribal system. Some sociologists call this stage of the social development of humanity, and rightly so, "a *political system of social life*" (Franz Oppenheimer).

Because the state is a social phenomenon, it should in the first place be analyzed from the sociological viewpoint. Only after that can we proceed to analyze it from the viewpoint of the law. The principal question which must be taken into account in any sociological appraisal of the state is the question as to what social group created a concrete state, the object of this analysis. As a rule, only a certain social group of interests provides the beginning of the existence of a specific state. In earlier times it was above all a certain tribal group; in modern times it is usually the *nation*, represented in this creative group by one or more political *parties*, which constitutes this creative group aiming at the creation of a state.

The author's researches on the first and second Soviet "Ukrainian Republic" (1917-1918 and 1918-1919) have disclosed a series of incontestable proofs to the effect that both these republics were the creation of an *alien*, and not a Ukrainian political party.¹ The

¹ Dr. Matthew Stachiw: *Persha sovietska respublika v Ukraini (The First Soviet Republic in Ukraine)*, New York-Scranton, 1956.

Dr. Matthew Stachiw: *Druha sovietska respublika v Ukraini (The Second Soviet Republic in Ukraine)*, New York-Scranton, 1957.

first Soviet authority on the partially-occupied Ukrainian territory was created by the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks, known at that time as the "Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Bolsheviks." This party was completely alien to the Ukrainian people for two important reasons:

(a) It had its center and basis in the ethnographic Russia proper (Muscovy), and as a result the directing center belonged to another nation-country;

(b) In Ukraine, this party's membership was *non-Ukrainian*, consisting exclusively of the members of the Russian minority in Ukraine. Among them were not only the Russians proper, but numerous Russified elements from among the Jews, Poles and others, and a small percentage of Russified Ukrainians. Members in this party who openly acknowledged their Ukrainian nationality barely constituted 3 per cent, an insignificant quantity, which was not taken into consideration as a Ukrainian group. Thus this party was totally alien to the Ukrainian nation, inasmuch as its membership was nationally Russian and its nerve center was outside Ukraine, in Muscovy.

There is still another characteristic of this alien party which operated in Ukraine, namely, that up to the summer of 1918 it had no center in Ukraine for its provincial organizations. The directing center of the Russian Communist Party directed its provincial organizations in Ukraine, first from Petrograd and later from Moscow, *directly* without any unifying center in Ukraine. This only indicated that the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party regarded Ukraine as a province of Russia, divided, as was all Russia, into separate provinces (*gubernias*). It could not think of any separate national peculiarity of Ukraine in its economic-social, political and national-cultural aspects.

This purely Russian political organization, that is, the Russian Communist Party (then still known as the "Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Bolsheviks"), in December of 1917 established the Soviet authority on Ukrainian territory that was partially occupied by Russian troops, so as to provide a formal pretext of war against the Ukrainian National Republic and its Central *Rada*. The leading center of the Russian Communist Party, as a matter of fact, created *five* different Soviet republics in Ukraine.² Under these circumstances one can hardly say that these five

² Stachiw, *op. cit.*, *Druha sovietska respublika v Ukraini (The Second Soviet Republic in Ukraine)*, p. 31-41.

republics *really* constituted a form of *statehood* of the Ukrainian people.

All these Soviet republics in Ukraine, which were formed between the end of December of 1917 and February of 1918, lasted only until April of 1918. At that time, under the counter-offensive of the Army of the Ukrainian National Republic which acted in alliance with the armies of the Central Powers, these republics fell and *formally liquidated* themselves. The leaders of these Moscow-inspired republics, as private citizens, emigrated from Ukraine to Soviet Russia.

II

It was not until July 5, 1918, that these exiled Russian leaders, upon instruction of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, created a separate association of all provincial organizations of this party in Ukraine, which assumed the name of the "Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine (CPbU). The name of the "party" was adopted specifically for the purpose of agitating the ill-informed peasantry and workers, who could be led to believe that it was not the "Russian Communist Party" which conducted an aggressive war against the Ukrainian State, but that in reality it was a civil war being waged by a *Ukrainian* party of the Bolsheviks.

This provincial form of the party administration of a totally alien Russian party under the name of the "Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine" was purely a smoke screen for the *second military aggression* of Russia against the Ukrainian National Republic in December of 1918. The Russian Communist Party, under the name of the "Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine," created on the partially-occupied territory of Ukraine a separate administration in the form of an "independent Ukrainian Soviet Republic." In the war against the armies of the Ukrainian National Republic and later on, in the summer of 1919, against the "Volunteer Army" of General Denikin, the Soviet Russian occupation army was defeated and was compelled to abandon the territory of Ukraine. After the Soviet Russian army left Ukraine the entire Soviet Russian party apparatus of the Soviet state in Ukraine also went back to Soviet Russia. Thus came again the formal *dissolution* and *liquidation* of all the principal organs of this state and the dissolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine. This event took place on October 2, 1919, in Moscow.

After this date, October 2, 1919, the struggle for power in Ukraine was again conducted *directly* by the Central Committee

of the Russian Communist Party itself. Only in December of 1919 did Moscow begin renewing the Soviet forms of authority in the occupied part of Ukraine, but this time in the form of a strictly *party-power system—revolutionary committees (revcoms) and revolutionary military committees (revvoencoms)*, and not in the form of *soviets* of deputies. The national organization of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine itself was restored only in the spring of 1920. This "party" was wholly ruled and directed by the Politburo from Moscow, which appointed and dismissed the members of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine according to its own whims and volition.

All these facts clearly indicate that the political organization, that is, the Russian Communist Party and its provincial organization—the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine—continued to be an *alien* element with respect to the Soviet republics in Ukraine. This fact is substantiated by incontrovertible documents of the Russian Communist Party.

The new program of the Russian Communist Party in March of 1919 spoke about the fact of the formal existence of the separate Soviet republics of Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Byelorussia. It said:

Ukraine, Lithuania, Latvia and Byelorussia exist at the present time as separate Soviet republics. Thus the state structure is so resolved.

But this does not in any measure mean that the Russian Communist Party in its turn should be reorganized into a federation of independent Communist Parties.

The VIIIth congress of the Russian Communist Party decrees: There must exist only one centralized Communist Party, with one Central Committee, conducting the party work in all branches of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. All decisions of the Russian Communist Party and its leading organs unconditionally bind all branches of the party, regardless of their nationality membership. The Central Committees of Ukrainian, Lithuanian and Latvian Communists have rights only of provincial committees of the party and they are *completely subordinate* to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party.³ (Italics added—Author).

The subordination of these allegedly "national" branches to the Russian Communist Party and its Central Committee was strictly *military* and on a military basis. In the program decisions of 1919 the military principle with respect to party discipline was defined as follows:

The party finds itself in a situation in which the most exact centralization and severest discipline are an absolute necessity. The decisions of higher levels

³ *Kommunisticheskaja Rossijskaja Partia Bolshevikov v rezolutsiakh ee s'ezdov i konferentsij (The Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks in the Resolutions of its Congresses and Conferences)*, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923, p. 255.

are absolutely mandatory for lower organs. All [members of the party] must *execute every decision* and only later may they appeal to the competent organ. In this sense the party must have at the present time a really military discipline.⁴ (All italics added).

With such a politically-centralized party which possessed an *unlimited* dictatorial power on all the territories of all the formal Soviet republics, it was hardly possible that any national sovereign state could exist; there was no possibility for a *local autonomy* of a council to emerge.

American writer Richard Pipes draws quite a correct conclusion from such a state of affairs, saying that "the sovereignty over all Soviet areas belongs to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. Soviet federalism did not bring the division between the center and the provinces; only decentralization could make the building of truly federalist relations possible."⁵

III

Inasmuch as the national composition of this Russian Communist Party on the territory of Ukraine is concerned, its character changed in the Party's favor through the fact of conquest and the military successes of Soviet Russia, as far as increase of membership of elements of Ukrainian national origin is concerned. But even this increase was slight and was effectuated very slowly, which is borne out by the following data:

In 1918 the Russian Communist Party in Ukraine had barely 4,364 members. In relation to the almost 30-million population of the eastern and central Ukrainian lands, this represented an infinitesimal figure. This handful of Communists could never establish the authority of revolutionary committees or *soviets*.

In the same year only 3 per cent of the personnel of the organization of the Russian Communist Party acknowledged their Ukrainian origin—130 persons, members of the Russian Communist Party who were of Ukrainian nationality. Naturally, such a small number of Bolsheviks of Ukrainian origin could not possibly exert a decisive influence on general Ukrainian social life.

In the elections to the All-Russian Constitutional Assembly which took place at the end of November of 1917, the slate of the Russian Communist Party in Ukraine received barely 10 per cent of all the votes in Ukraine. This again demonstrated that the

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁵ Richard Pipes: *Formation of the Soviet Union. Communism and Nationalism*. 1917-1923. Harvard, Cambridge, Mass., 1954, p. 244-245.

political influence of the Bolsheviks, despite all the communist demagoguery, was minimal in comparison with the Ukrainian parties, which overwhelmingly supported the Ukrainian National Republic.⁶

This insignificant number of Bolsheviks in Ukraine in general, and of Ukrainian origin in particular, could only seize control of the power in Ukraine through conquest by the *regular army* of Soviet Russia.

It is significant that the present-day Soviet official literature is shying away from publicizing the national composition of the party organizations of the Russian Communist Party in Ukraine. It does so in order not to reveal that Ukraine was conquered by Communist Russia. This matter, therefore, especially merits greater emphasis.

After the first military victories of the Soviet Russian troops over the armies of the Ukrainian National Republic in the beginning of 1919, the Russian Communist Party increased considerably the number of its members in Ukraine, but not with the Ukrainian national element. In March of 1919 the membership of the Russian Communist Party in Ukraine rose to 16,368; these new members came either directly from Russia proper or from the Russian minority in Ukraine. At the beginning of 1920, when Ukrainian Communist-Borotbists became members of the Russian Communist Party, the Ukrainian element in the party increased percentage-wise. The absolute figure of members of the party in March of 1920 was 25,247; but after the purges of the party in the spring and summer of the same year the membership fell to approximately 15,000 persons.⁷

In the summer of 1920 it seemed to many people that the Soviet Russian system had finally triumphed. Hence a significant number of people tried to "adapt" themselves to the new government by enrolling in the governmental party. This more than anything else explains the increase in the membership of the party as compared with the year 1918. That year, 1920, was characterized by the prevalence in the rank and file of the Russian Communist Party of the Russified Jewish element and various other minorities. Volodymyr Vynnychenko, who in the summer of 1920 remained under the Soviet occupation, had ample opportunity to study not only the actual conditions, but also official documents relating to the

⁶ cf. bibliography of the author's *The First Soviet Republic in Ukraine and The Second Soviet Republic in Ukraine*.

⁷ The first figure is taken from *Ezhegodnik Kominternu* for 1923, Moscow, 1923, p. 477; the other figures are quoted after Volodymyr Vynnychenko's *Ukrainska Komunistychna Partiya ta KPbU (The Ukrainian Communist Party and the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine)*, Vienna, 1921, p. 9.

party life of the dictatorship. In his book, entitled, *The Ukrainian Communist Party (UCP) and the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine (CPbU)*, he provides some data on the national composition of the CPbU, the official government party organization of that time:

It is a party of the military and bureaucratic petit-bourgeois intelligentsia, with an insignificant mixture of Russian or Russified workers, who live on the territory of Ukraine... The whole party numbers 15,000 members. As is known, all official and responsible government posts are occupied only by Communists from the official party. In all the institutions of Ukraine there are more than 15,000 posts. It is clear, though, that the entire party must be a party of officials, bureaucrats... The national composition of the party is streaky, with the Jewish element in a prevailing majority. One can state unerringly that 80 per cent of the members of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine are Jews, 20-26 per cent are Russians, and 10 per cent are Ukrainians (the remnants of those *Borotbists* who had joined the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine).³

Vynnychenko was able not only to give an exact picture with respect to the national composition of the party, but also managed to provide important data on the social composition of the membership of the party which ruled occupied Ukraine. This party, which was propagandized as being a "purely proletarian and workers' party," was in fact a party of bureaucrats—namely the civil and military administration. Even the insignificant percentage of industrial workers who belonged to the official party, at the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, had been transformed into a bureaucratic apparatus by being placed in official administrative posts.

The percentage ratios of the various nationalities among the members of the Russian Communist Party in Ukraine, or rather its branch, the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine, later underwent a substantial change inasmuch as with the victory of the Soviet troops in Ukraine by the end of 1920 the Russian element obtained an overwhelming preponderance in all the party organizations of Ukraine. This came about mainly through the influx of new elements from Russia proper. In addition, the Russian minority in Ukraine, after the defeat of the White Russian movement, flocked into the ranks of the Communist Party, inasmuch as membership conferred great personal advantages. There was also an increase in the number of members of Ukrainian national origin. But even then the participation of Ukrainian Communists in the official party remained insignificant.

Although later on the Ukrainians, whether for personal or "political" reasons, joined the ranks of the Communist Party of

³ Vynnychenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

Bolsheviks of Ukraine, the Russian center saw to it that the Ukrainians were admitted only in limited numbers and that the Ukrainians were never permitted to become decisive factors in the party organizations. This selective system admitted to the party only those Ukrainians who, soul and body were at the disposal of Moscow. Whoever from among these subsequently proved to be disloyal was mercilessly "liquidated," one way or another.

Some statistical data on the national composition of the party are more than eloquent:

In 1922, two years after the victory of the Soviet Russian troops in Ukraine, the percentage of Russians in the whole Russian Communist Party was 72. An additional 10 per cent comprised those Communist members, who, although of different national origin, were completely Russified and spoke only the Russian language. Thus the Russians constituted 82 per cent of all the members of the Russian Communist Party.

The percentage of members of Ukrainian origin in 1922 was 5.88. But actually this figure should be lowered to 3, if we take into consideration only those members, who not only were of Ukrainian origin, but could speak Ukrainian, that is, who were not Russified.

When we take into consideration the number of Communists according to the national origin and not according to their real nationality (if we count as non-Russian nationalities also those who could not talk their mother tongue), we receive a very interesting picture of communization of a given people and the confidence Moscow had in such. Thus, on the basis of the data of 1922 the Communists of a given people, were percentage-wise as follows:

Russians -----	3.80
Ukrainians -----	0.94
Jews -----	7.20
Byelorussians -----	1.67
Armenians -----	2.91
Germans -----	2.91 ^o

These figures provide us with two distinct phenomena. First, in 1922 the Russians, by origin, culture and language, constituted 82 per cent of the entire membership of the Russian Communist Party on the territory of the Soviet authority, while they constituted at the same time only 49 per cent of the entire population of the USSR. The second phenomenon is the percentage of Communists in every nationality which was part of the Soviet empire in 1922.

^o These figures are taken from *SSSR i natsionalnaia problema (The USSR and the Nationality Problem)*, Moscow, 1924, p. 26, quoted from Pipes, p. 269.

These figures are given not in the relation 1:100, but that of 1:1000. These official figures reveal that of all the many nationalities in the Soviet empire the numerous Ukrainians had the smallest *per millium* of Communists as compared with other nationalities. With regard to the Russians, there were 4 times less Communists among the Ukrainians, and almost 8 times less than among the Jews.

But the Russians prevailed in the entire party organization of the Russian Communist Party, inasmuch as they constituted 82 per cent of the entire membership. They were leading and decisive factors of the party not only technically, but nationally as well. The entire Russian Communist Party in its activities and by its character was a Russian party. Richard Pipes justly points out that at the beginning of March, and even more so during the October revolution in all the non-Russian countries of the former Russian empire the term "Communist-Bolshevik" was identical with that of the Russian.¹⁰

IV

From the social-political viewpoint the Soviet republic in Ukraine (the third, which has lasted to this day since the establishment of the USSR) remains unchanged. The Russian center directs not only a gigantic machine of coercion (army and police), but it remains a nerve center from the viewpoint of political and party policies, exercising the actual social sovereignty over the whole territory of the Soviet Union.

This is also substantiated by the now compulsory "Statute of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," which was adopted at the XXth Congress of the Communist Party in February, 1956. We should not forget that despite the existence of the various "parties" of the Soviet Republics, every Communist on the territory of the USSR must be a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and is bound by its "Statute." In the first paragraph of this document on the duties of members, we read the following directive:

A member of the party is obligated:

(a) To safeguard in all ways the unity of the party as a principal requisite of the strength and might of the party;

(b) To obey party and state discipline, which are equally obligatory for all members of the party (pp. 4-5).

When there is only one party and where there exists a discipline over all members of the party by a sole party center in Moscow, politically there are no other state creations except that of the "USSR."

¹⁰ Pipes, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

All the decisions of the local party organizations are only the execution of the general and special decisions of the Central Committee of the Presidium of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; the separate "republic parties" (for instance, the "Communist Party of Ukraine") are by statute on the level of all local, *rayon* or *oblast* party organizations. Their members are bound not only by the party discipline, but by the state discipline of the USSR as well.

In such a system there is no room not only for any other form of statehood, but even for local community autonomy.

Alongside this actual social system of the USSR there exists a sphere of theoretical law, which is something entirely different. This system of legal relationship must exist, even despite and against the will of Moscow, inasmuch as it opposes the nationalism of the non-Russian nations, that is their liberation movements. The basis of this legal system and its significance warrant a special discussion which will be provided in another article.
