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**REVIVAL OF A LANGUAGE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS
OF THE UKRAINIANS OF DONETSK REGION UNDER CONDITIONS
OF “PERESTROIKA” AND DURING THE FIRST YEARS
OF INDEPENDENT UKRAINE**

Abstract. *The aim of the research consists in elucidating the nature and main aspects of the development of a language identity and national consciousness of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region during the period of “perestroika” and the first years of independence of Ukraine, in the context of modern ethno-national problems. The research methodology is based primarily on the principle of historicism, concretized by the approach to historical phenomena and processes from the standpoint of dynamics, the study of the relationships between them and their interdependence. The use of this principle allows us to study the dynamics of the historical process from the point of view of its past and development trends in the future. A number of general historical methods have been used, namely: comparative-historical, historical comparative studies, retrospective. The latter, in particular, provides for the reconstruction of certain phenomena in the process of the revival of a cultural and national identity*

of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region in the context of "perestroika" and the first years of independent Ukraine. This allows us to construct separate models for the development of a national consciousness in our time, using, at the same time, some historical patterns and traditions. **The scientific novelty** consists in analyzing the process of the revival of a language identity and national consciousness of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region in the context of "perestroika" and the first years of independent Ukraine. This allows us to design individual models for the development of a cultural and national identity under modern conditions. **The Conclusions.** The process of reviving the cultural and national identity of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region in the context of "perestroika" and the first years of independent Ukraine became an interdependent phenomenon with the emergence in Donetsk region of a number of cultural national and socio-political organizations, primarily, Donetsk regional organization of Taras Shevchenko the Ukrainian Language Society. Despite the active process of Russification and denationalization, which has been carried out since the 1930-ies, the Ukrainian identity in Donetsk region still prevailed for some time. However, a targeted Russification policy aimed at destroying the language identity and national consciousness of the Ukrainian, naturally led to the confusion of all the peoples of the Soviet Union on the principles of the so-called internationalism into one, artificially formed, "homo sovieticus". Thanks to public organizations and cultural national societies in Donetsk region at the end of the 1980-ies – beginning of the 1990-ies, the process of Ukrainization of the identity of the region population began. However, a number of factors prevented this. In particular, the predominantly individualistic orientation of ethnic self-expression of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region prevented the widespread development of their language identification and national identity. Also, as a result of a massive Russification and planting of chauvinistic stereotypes, the Ukrainians were deliberately turned into a second-class ethnic mass, the outcasts. The leaders of such a policy were mainly the former party-Komsomol functionaries, who, thanks to connections with criminals and oligarchic circles, reached leading positions in almost all authority structures during the 1990-ies. And, naturally, it was they, who stood at the origins of separatism long before the spring of 2014.

Key words: cultural national identity, revival, the Ukrainians, Donetsk region, independence.

ВІДРОДЖЕННЯ МОВНО-НАЦІОНАЛЬНОГО САМОУСВІДОМЛЕННЯ УКРАЇНЦІВ ДОНЕЧЧИНИ В УМОВАХ "ПЕРЕБУДОВИ" ТА У ПЕРШІ РОКИ НЕЗАЛЕЖНОЇ УКРАЇНИ

Анотація. **Мета дослідження** полягає в з'ясуванні характеру та основних аспектів процесу розвитку мовної ідентичності та національної свідомості українців Донеччини в період "перебудови" та перших років незалежної України в контексті сучасних етнонаціональних проблем. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується насамперед на принципі історизму, що конкретизується підходом до історичних явищ та процесів з позиції динаміки, вивчення взаємозв'язків між ними та їх взаємообумовленості. Використання цього принципу дозволяє дослідити динаміку історичного процесу з точки зору його минулого та тенденцій розвитку в майбутньому. Застосовано низку загальноісторичних методів, а саме: порівняльно-історичний, історичної компаративістики, ретроспективний. Останній, зокрема, передбачає реконструкцію певних явищ процесу відродження мовно-національного самоусвідомлення українців Донеччини в умовах перебудови та перших років незалежної України. Це дає змогу конструювати окремі моделі розвитку національної свідомості вже в наш час, використовуючи, при цьому, деякі історичні зразки й традиції. **Наукова новизна** полягає в аналізі процесу відродження мовної ідентичності та національної свідомості українців Донеччини в умовах "перебудови" та перших років незалежної України. Це дає змогу конструювати окремі моделі розвитку мовно-національного самоусвідомлення в умовах сьогодення. **Висновки.** Процес відродження мовно-національного самоусвідомлення українців Донеччини в умовах перебудови та перших років незалежної України став взаємообумовленим явищем із появою на Донеччині цілої низки культурно-національних і громадсько-політичних організацій, насамперед Донецької обласної організації Товариства української мови імені Тараса Шевченка. Попри активний процес русифікації та денационалізації, що здійснювався від 1930-х рр., українська ідентичність на Донеччині все ж певний час переважала. Однак цілеспрямована русифікаторська політика, спрямована на нищення мовної ідентичності та національної свідомості українців вела до змішання усіх народів Радянського Союзу на

принципах так званого інтернаціоналізму в один, штучно формований, “гомо советікус”. Саме завдяки громадським організаціям і культурно-національним товариствам на Донеччині на рубежі 1980-х – 1990-х рр. почався процес українізації ідентичності населення краю. Однак ціла низка чинників стала на перешкоді цьому. Зокрема, переважно індивідуалістична спрямованість етнічного самовираження українців Донеччини перешкоджала широкому розвою їх мовної ідентифікації та національного самоусвідомлення. Також, внаслідок масованої русифікації та насадження шовіністичних стереотипів, українців цілеспрямовано перетворювали на другосортну етнічну масу, ізгоїв. Ініціаторами такої політики переважно виступали колишні партійно-комсомольські функціонери, які завдяки зв'язкам із криміналітетом і олігархічними колами, впродовж 1990-х рр. досягли керівних посад практично у всіх владних структурах. І саме вони стояли біля витоків сепаратизму задовго до весни 2014 р.

Ключові слова: мовно-національне самоусвідомлення, відродження, українці, Донеччина, незалежність.

The Problem Statement. The problem of preserving the Ukrainian language, a national culture and the development of a national consciousness of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region became one of the defining processes of a national revival that began already during the period of “perestroika” and the first years of Ukraine's independence. However, the inconsistency of this strategic task solving, especially by local and state authorities, led to a number of deformations and drawbacks. In particular, this inconsistency also took place in Donetsk region, where the process of revival of a language national self-awareness of the Ukrainians was actually sabotaged, which in the future became one of the main reasons for the spread of “Russkiy Mir” and separatist tendencies in the region.

The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications. R. Shporluk analyzed the question of the identity transformation of the Ukrainian and Russian nations in the context of their post-imperial transformation (Шпорлюк, 2000). The revival of a language national self-awareness of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region under conditions of “perestroika” and the first years of independent Ukraine was also, to some extent, analyzed in V. Biletsky's works (Biletskyi, 2009a; 2009b), T. Bolbat's works (Bolbat, 2002), S. Kulchytsky's and L. Yakubova's works (Kulchytskyi & Yakubova, 2016), H. Kuromyia's works (Kuromyia, 2002), P. Lavriv's works (Lavriv, 2012), A. Serheyev's works (Serheyev, 2012; 2014), V. Smoliy's, S. Kulchytsky's and L. Yakubova's works (Smoliy, Kulchytskyi & Yakubova, 2016), H. Turchenko's works (Turchenko, 2016), H. Turchenko's and F. Turchenko's works (Turchenko & Turchenko, 2015a; 2015b), F. Turchenko's works (Turchenko, 2009), L. Yakubova's, V. Holovko's and Ya. Prymachenko's works (Yakubova, Holovko & Prymachenko, 2018) and the others. However, there is no special study, which would focus on the revival of a language national self-awareness of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region under conditions of “perestroika” and the first years of independent Ukraine.

The purpose of the article consists in finding out the nature and basic aspects of the of development process of a language identity and national consciousness of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region during “perestroika” and the first years of independent Ukraine in the context of contemporary ethno-national problems.

The Statement of the Basic Material. The rise of a social and political life in Donetsk region at the end of the 1980-ies was caused not only by the process of “perestroika” of the Soviet society, but also by more significant factors that originated from the independence and state-building traditions of the Ukrainian nation. Thus, at the beginning of the XXth century, the national liberation movement was of an utmost importance in the territory of Ukraine. These events became an important ideological and political foundation for the development

of public and political organizations and movements not only in those parts of Ukraine where there were significant traditions of a national liberation struggle and a high level of a national consciousness of the population, but also in a more ethno-politically complex region – Donetsk region.

F. Turchenko drew attention to the fact that the process of “perestroika” in the territory of the USSR caused the beginning of a national revival, increasing interest in the historical past of the people, their language and culture. In October 1989, the Communist Party of Ukraine, trying to take control of these processes, initiated the adoption by the Verkhovna Rada of the Law “On Languages in the Ukrainian SSR”. This document strengthened the state status of the Ukrainian language and guaranteed the equality of the languages of all the peoples living in the territory of Ukraine. At the same time, the Ukrainian language was used in the documentation (Turchenko, 2009, pp. 71–72). It was a real chance to revive their language and national identity for the Ukrainians of Donetsk region.

M. Yuriy, refuting the well-established assertion that independence came to Ukraine only as a result of a happy coincidence of historical circumstances, emphasized that, in fact, independence became the result of the struggle of the generations of the Ukrainian people, and the favourable circumstances of 1990 – 1991 were only the “starting mechanism” of the accumulated energy for self-affirmation. At the same time, these circumstances led to a contradictory nature and revealed the internal weakness of the Ukrainian state, since the peaceful nature of the national revolution was not accompanied by an adequate renewal of the authority structures. (Yurii, 2004, p. 240). Starting from “perestroika” and later during the “Orange Revolution” and after the “Revolution of Dignity” in Ukraine it was extremely difficult to achieve a national development, in particular, in terms of the language and identity. This process was particularly difficult in Donetsk region, which for many decades underwent a deliberate Russification and denationalization.

For a long time, Donetsk region had been a kind of “melting cauldron”, which combined various linguistic, national and religious cultural features and factors. Some cities and towns in the region, such as Mariupol, Starobeshevo, Volnovakha, Amvrosiivka, Donetsk, and Makiyivka, despite the cultural differences, retain the features of this process. Donbass was at the crossroads of a variety of cultural influences: it became the home for migrants from all over the Soviet Union. Often this territory was populated by the former criminal elements, as the Soviet authorities massively sent the latter to the industrial areas of the region (Abdullin & Sytnyk, 2005, pp. 111–112). At the same time, thousands of these criminal elements, as a rule, lacked some educational and cultural level and had an aggressive attitude towards all Ukrainian.

The ethnic processes in Donbass of the XIXth – the XXth centuries can be compared to the “American cauldron”, where detached from the national roots, to a large extent, the lumpenproletariat element was levelled off in terms of an ethnic self-identification (Pasko, Pasko & Korzhov, 2013, pp. 269–270). O. Kuznetsova considers the unification of the Ukrainian and the Russian ethnic groups into a common population structure as a defining feature of the ethno-cultural specifics of Donetsk region, which is of a particular importance to the development of an effective regulating policy of ethno-political relations (Kuznetsova, 2013, p. 84). Therefore, preservation of Ukrainian national identity in Donetsk region remained a serious problem. After all, the process of a national revival, which spread to almost all post-Soviet space from the period of “perestroika”, faced a number of obstacles in various spheres of a socio-political life ((Kulchytskyi & Yakubova, 2016, pp. 285–286). Among the

obstacles, perhaps, the most serious test for the Ukrainian society was the propaganda of “the Russian world”. The latter, in turn, was largely based on the deformation of a historical memory and national consciousness of the Ukrainians (Yakubova, Holovko & Prymachenko, 2018, pp. 125–130).

R. Shporliuk noted that M. Gorbachev, to some extent, provoked a tendency to form a civil society in the USSR. Because the Soviet state, governed by the Communist Party, failed at fulfilling the historic mission it had set for itself (Shporliuk, 2000). Most of all, perhaps, it concerned the “national issue”. After all, the task of forming and sustaining the conception of the “Soviet people” was not solved, but the unsolved task also led to a number of the ethnic conflicts in the USSR at the end of the 1980-ies – beginning of the 1990-ies.

According to P. Goble’s point of view, M. Gorbachev, giving the impact to the development of a civil society, did not even realize the threats that impact had for the very existence of the Soviet Union (Goble, 1987, pp. 98–99). A special contradiction consisted in the probable combination of democracy with the remnants of “an imperial consciousness” in the attitude towards the non-Russian peoples within the USSR. This is despite the fact that “an imperial consciousness” flourished in the Soviet Union even seventy years after the collapse of the Russian Empire (Shporliuk, 2000). It is largely due to the activity of cultural national and public political societies and organizations, in some republics of the Soviet Union, that the process of a national identity revival began in the second half of the 1980-ies.

Beginning in Ukraine, and in particular, in a multinational Donetsk region, at the end of the 1980-ies, the process of a national revival at the beginning of the 1990-ies became an important guarantee of a national state formation (Serhieiev, 2014, pp. 299–300). Since 1988, the rebirth of a national identity and identity had been observed in Donetsk region. At the same time, the socio-political movement gained a certain extend. Thus, in the spring of 1988 the activities of the oppositional civil organizations, in particular the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, became more active. However, unlike in Western Ukraine, the political and national awakening of Eastern Ukraine was slow. There grew some dissatisfaction with the activities of the CPSU leadership, especially the representatives of the local party nomenclature. In the summer of 1988, the first civil protest actions began in Donetsk, but unlike in Western Ukraine, they were small in number and less known to the general public (Bolbat, 2002, p. 77).

At a meeting of Donetsk department of the All-Union memorial historical and educational society on October 21, 1989, after H. Hordasevych’s speech on the poetry and fate of V. Stus, it was decided to address T. Shevchenko the Ukrainian Language Society with a request to organize a meeting in memory of the poet and to collect signatures for the rehabilitation of V. Stus (SADR, f. 6787, d. 1, c. 6, p. 4). It should be noted that during this period T. Shevchenko the Ukrainian Language Society became the leading center in Donetsk region for the revival of a language and national self-awareness of the Ukrainians. This society was considered as the main factor of a national “awakening after half a century of hibernation” of the Ukrainians of the region. This was evidenced by numerous letters from citizens about the support of the project of the “Programme of People’s Movement of Ukraine”, which came to the editorial staff of the newspaper “The Literary Ukraine” from Donetsk region. At the same time, the authors of these letters emphasized the need to extend the activities of T. Shevchenko the Ukrainian Language Society and the People’s Movement of Ukraine in Donetsk. The authors of these letters stated that the Ukrainian language in Ukraine, and especially in Donetsk region, “should not be on the rights of a distant poor relative” (CSAPAU, f. 270, d. 1, c. 23, pp. 17–22).

The development of a language and national self-awareness always depended on education. In the second half of the 1980-ies, certain conditions were created for the Ukrainians of Donetsk region to realize their national right for education in a native language. However, in this realm of problems, there were far more questions than answers to them and ways to solve them. Thus, due to the examination of the activities of the departments for education, schools and pre-school institutions of Donetsk region in 1987, it was noted that in most of the schools the requirements for the programmes for studying History of the UkrSR in the course of History of the USSR were not met. Some teachers did not have a proper understanding of the main methodological directions of work to ensure that the study of History of the UkrSSR was properly linked to the general course of History the USSR. There were also cases when the lessons in History of Donetsk region were not conducted (CSASBPAU, f. 166, d. 15, c. 9329, p. 50).

Since 1989, the activists of Taras Shevchenko the Ukrainian Language Society of Donetsk region tried to bring to life the long-standing goal of the Ukrainians of this region – to restore the activity of a full-fledged Ukrainian educational institution with the latest equipment and a highly qualified teaching staff capable of starting Ukkrainization of the educational system in Donetsk. First of all, in 1990 owing to the initiative and dedicated work of Leonid Hromovyi, Donetsk Ukrainian Secondary School of the Humanities No. 65 was founded. Becoming the head of this educational institution L. Hromovyi set the goal of Ukranianization of the educational system in Donetsk region. His point of view on this matter was the following: in Ukraine as in an independent state, the educational process must be conducted in the Ukrainian language (Fedorchuk, 2009). Later on, similar to Donetsk Secondary School of the Humanities, similar schools began to be founded in Slovyansk, Mariupol, Horlivka and some other towns of Donetsk region (Serhieiev, 2012, p. 90).

During the beginning of the 1990-ies, the newspaper “Skhidnyi Chasopys” played an increasingly important role in the social and political life of Donetsk region, headed by M. Tyschenko as its editor (Mazanov, 2008, pp. 86–87). The newspaper “Skhidnyi Chasopys” was founded in 1992 by T. Shevchenko Donetsk Regional Society of the Ukrainian Language. At first it was a monthly newspaper and later a weekly regional Ukrainian newspaper. Since 1993, its monthly supplement “The Kozatskyi Krai” began to be published (Biletskyi, 2009b, p. 12). Among other things, the purpose of these publications was to foster the national consciousness of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region, as well as to form the general context of an ideological and patriotic upbringing of young people on the basis of historical patterns and traditions of the national liberation struggle of the Ukrainians for their own state.

According to the census of 1989, there were 116 nationalities in Donetsk region. At the same time, the Ukrainians made up 50,7% and the Russians – 43,65%. And according to a survey conducted by the regional statistical office in 1991, 32% – residents of Donetsk region perceived themselves as the representatives of the Ukrainian nation, 25,5% – as the Russians, 36,5% – both the Ukrainians and the Russians (Popov, But, Kuznietsova, 2003, pp. 217–218). That is, despite the active process of Russification and denationalization that took place since the 1930-ies, the Ukrainian identity in Donetsk region prevailed. However, this situation, when slightly more than half of the population of the region was unable to identify their own identity, testified to the natural result of the implementation of a kind of a national policy in the USSR, which, in fact, aimed at Russification and the actual denationalization of all the peoples of the Soviet Union on the principles of the so-called internationalization.

Concerning the national cultural self-identification of the inhabitants of Donetsk region, in the first half of the 1990-ies, the population of this region was largely regarded as Ukrainian-

Russian or Russian-Ukrainian biethnors. Thus, the number of biethnors was about half of all inhabitants of the region, with the gradual increase in the Russian identification. Expectations for the continuation of Ukkrainization, which began in the early 1990-ies, disappeared gradually. At the same time, the number of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region was only 10% versus more than 60% in Ukraine as a whole (Biletskyi, 2009a, p. 57).

For a long time, the policy of Russification was systematically implemented in Donetsk region and the idea of an “all-Ruskyi Mir” was consistently implemented. The period of the end of the 1980-ies – beginning of the 1990-ies marked a gradual recession from the denationalized self-awareness of the Ukrainians in the region. However, it was not easy to get rid of the Soviet stereotypes imposed on the citizens for the decades.

As noted by H. Kuromiy, the miners' strike movement in Donetsk region in 1989 was primarily directed against the branches of the Communist Party. But already in 1991, there was a marked change in the sentiment of Donbas working class, in the direction of support of Ukraine's independence. And already on December 1, 1991, the referendum clearly showed that even russified Donetsk region, in general, supported the independence of Ukraine. In Donetsk region, 76,6% of the region's residents took part in voting. At the same time, 84% of them supported the independence of Ukraine (Kuromiia, 2002, p. 472). Reacting, at a meeting in Belovezhskaya Pushcha on December 7–8, to the results of the referendum on December 1, 1991, which was to confirm the vote for Ukraine's independence, B. Yeltsyn asked L. Kravchuk the following question: “What? Even Donbas voted in favour of Ukraine's independence?”. Answering the question the latter meticulously read the results of voting for each region separately (Vilson, 2004, pp. 277–278). This fact meant that despite the total Russification and communisation, the bulk of Donbas residents illustrated their pro-Ukrainian orientation.

At the same time, P. Lavriv expressed his conviction that day-to-day work on promoting independence remained extremely important. First of all – regarding the development of a national consciousness of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region (Lavriv, 2012, p. 5). After all, the overwhelming majority of the population of Donetsk region in achieving Ukraine's independence saw, first of all, the prospects for improvement in the economic and social spheres of life. But in order to do this, it was necessary to become, firstly, a full-fledged, civilized state. This fact, in its turn, was impossible without a national unity and the achievement of an appropriate level of a national consciousness. Further events in the country, among other things, showed that among the reasons for the economic downturn in Ukraine were: the efferent movement of Donbas from Kyiv, which allegedly ignored Donbas's interests and even “exploited” it, as did Moscow at the time (Kuromiia, 2002, p. 473). Thus, in 1991 the majority of Donetsk region voted for Ukraine's independence. However, the hope and expectations, relied on this prospect, were not justified. At the beginning of the 1990-ies, those people, who considered Ukraine's independence as primarily economic independence, were confronted with a number of socio-economic problems. And for those citizens, who wanted, above all, political independence and Ukkrainization, the realities were too illusory. At the same time, the central government practically removed itself from the solution of cultural and national problems of the region, and for the local authorities the pro-Ukrainian spirit remained alien and unacceptable.

At the end of the 1980-ies – beginning of the 1990-ies the state formation process in Ukraine had a number of peculiarities that distinguished it from similar processes, which took place during this period in the former Soviet Union republics. During the existence of

the Soviet Union, the ethnic and national subcultures were actively formed in Donetsk region. Moreover, criminal elements played a significant role in this process, who, in general, were deprived of some national or ethnic orientation. During this period, ideologically interpreted internationalism contributed to the formation of the equality thesis of all “Soviet people” in the public consciousness. The country with many national cultures, languages, customs began to lose the specific, unique features of the culture of individual peoples, who inhabited it. In some regions, including Ukraine, there was a critical situation in the field of functioning and development of the national language. The collapse of the USSR, significant changes in the economy, culture, social sphere caused changes in views on the national, ethnic, mental characteristics (Kostiuk, 2008, pp. 69–70). Particularly difficult was the perception of the Ukrainian state-building processes in the industrial cities of Donetsk region, where the ideological “treatment” of citizens was particularly stable, which aimed at educating them in the spirit of internationalism and Ukrainophobia (Rozumnyi, 1998, p. 39). At the same time, various theses on the multinationality of Donetsk region, a kind of “symbiosis of Donetsk land, in the territory of which different ethnic groups retain their own language and culture”, “a unique Donetsk character” and “friendship of Donbas peoples” as the basis of Donbass regional identity, began to be cultivated. Therefore, the slogan of “the melting pot” of Donbass was deprived of connection with a real life. In the meantime, anti-Ukrainian sentiments and slogans spread in the information space (Smolii, Kulchytskyi & Yakubova, 2016, pp. 257–258).

H. Turchenko noted that after the collapse of the USSR, the Russian Federation had to recognize Ukraine’s independence. However, for the leadership of the Russian Federation it was rather a lingering annoyance or a historical anomaly that required correction. As an alternative to the independence of Ukraine, there was proclamation of joining various post-Soviet unions, such as “Slavic Unity”, “Customs Union”, “Eurasian Union”, etc. Similar ideologems, with the use of different means of informational influence, had been implemented among the population of Eastern Ukraine for a long time, in particular, – “Russkyi Mir” and “Novorossiia” (Turchenko, 2016, p. 217). The project of a local autonomy formation to counter Western Ukrainian influences had been spread actively since the beginning of the 1990-ies throughout South-Eastern Ukraine, and especially in the Crimea and Donetsk region. However, according to H. Turchenko and F. Turchenko, even in this region the anti-Ukrainian sentiments did not have a wide support among the population, since the majority of the population of this region, at one time, supported the independence of Ukraine, perceiving it as a unitary democratic republic (Turchenko & Turchenko, 2015b, p. 5). On February 8, 1992, the Congress “For Donbas Revival” was held at Donetsk regional public and political center. At the the Congress, in particular, a coordinating council of the organization was elected, which included, in addition to business leaders and researchers, a number of deputies and leaders of Donbas civic and political organizations. Among other things, there were calls for the federalization of Ukraine, in particular, – the separation of Donbas into the federal land, the formation of a national guard, the members of which were the local residents of the region and subordination of this unit to the local authorities (Tyshchenko, 1992). Later on, the problem of federalization was repeatedly raised in Donetsk region, and, as noted by V. Molodyk, even Switzerland and Germany were taken as an example, but the fact was not taken into account that these federations are based on a high political culture; stable traditions that can be found in a genetic code in every politician, every citizen (Molodyk, 1993, p. 1). Undoubtedly, this was already one of the first attempts to incline Donbass to the path

of separatism. In this case, the greatest threat would be the language national identity of the Ukrainians of Donetsk region.

H. Turchenko and F. Turchenko pay attention to the fact that the oligarchic system, with its subordinate authority structures, hindered the Ukrainian national development (Turchenko & Turchenko, 2015a, pp. 138–139). During the entire period of independent Ukraine, a kind of a criminal conglomerate was formed in Donetsk region with the authorities, the pro-government politicum, and the law and judicial bodies controlled by them. Taking a full advantage of the benefits of Ukrainian independent state, this “conglomerate” was hostile to everything Ukrainian, which ultimately led to the events of 2014 in Donbas. In particular, the beginning of modern Russian-Ukrainian war, which, like the previous Orange Revolution, meant a test of the spirit and national consciousness of the entire Ukrainian nation (Sytnyk, 2017, p. 79).

Back in 1994, simultaneously with the parliamentary and presidential elections and the election of local leaders, the so-called “a local referendum” or “an advisory poll” was held in Donetsk. Since the referendum was not foreseen by the law, this “poll”, among other things, raised the question about the status of the Russian language as a state language. A similar question was addressed to voters concerning the legitimization of a federal status. According to D. Kazanskyi, this referendum was a pre-election move. However, illustrative was the fact that about 80% of the population in Donetsk supported the federalization at that time (Kazanskyi, 2014). This “referendum” became one of the steps towards isolation from the rest of Ukraine.

According to I. Losev, in fact persons without rights (who were initially “on their knees” before the Soviet authorities, and then before the oligarchy, in contrast to all the talks that “no one put Donbas on the knees”) quickly began to consider themselves almost the “highest race” in Ukraine. At the same time, since the beginning of independence in Donetsk, various ideologems were formed about the peculiarity of Donbas territorial community, the significance of “Donetsk region inhabitants” and the difference between “native” and “alien”, etc. (Losev, 2013). Thus, “Donetsk identity” was artificially formed, which was opposed to all Ukrainian. All this formed a favourable ground for the spread of separatism in Donetsk region.

The Conclusions. Despite the active process of Russification and denationalization, which took place in the 1930-ies, the Ukrainian identity prevailed in Donetsk region at the beginning of the 1990-ies. However, a purposeful Russification policy aimed at destroying the language identity and national consciousness of the Ukrainians, led to mixing of all the peoples of the Soviet Union on the principles of the so-called internationalism into one, artificially formed, “*homo sovieticus*”. The new Ukrainian authorities practically did not care about the state of the Ukrainian language and national consciousness in Donetsk. Instead, only public organizations took care of the development of the Ukrainian language and national consciousness, quite sporadically and not systematically. It was owing to public organizations and Ukrainian cultural and national societies in Donetsk region at the end of the 1980-ies – the beginning of the 1990-ies there was made the attempt of Ukrainization of the population identity of the region. However, a number of factors hampered this process. In particular, the predominantly individualistic orientation of the ethnic self-expression of the Ukrainians in Donetsk region hindered the broad development of their language identification and a national self-awareness. As a result of a massive Russification and the chauvinistic stereotypes imposition, the Ukrainians were transformed purposefully into a

second-class ethnic mass. The initiators of this action were mainly the former party and komsomol functionaries, who during the 1990-ies reached leadership positions practically in all authority structures. It was they, who stood at the origin of separatism long before the spring of 2014. In Donetsk region “Donetsk identity” had been formed artificially for a long time, which was opposed to all Ukrainian. This formed a favourable ground for the spread of separatism in Donetsk region. During the period of independence in Donetsk region, there was formed a conglomerate of criminals, the authorities and the pro-government politicum, which controlled the law offices. Taking a full advantage of the Ukrainian independent state, this “conglomerate” was hostile to everything Ukrainian, which, among other things, led to the events of 2014 in Donbas.

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