The national development of Ukraine in Symon Petliura’s publicist legacy of 1902 – 1917

UDC 94(477)(092):323.1(477)
DOI 10.24919/2519-058X.19.233841

Nina SEMASHKO
PhD Student of the Faculty of History, Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, 60 Volodymyrska Street, Kyiv, Ukraine, postal code 01033 (pishkun84 @ukr.net)

ORCID: 0000-0002-0239-3691

Olena BULYGINA
External PhD Student at the Department of Administrative and Commercial Law, Zaporizhzhia National University, 74 Sobornyi Avenue, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, postal code 69063 (bulyhina.o@gmail.com)

ORCID: 0000-0002-9653-7405

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF UKRAINE
IN SYMON PETLIURA’S PUBLICIST LEGACY OF 1902 – 1917

Abstract. The purpose of the research is to analyze Symon Petliura’s journalistic heritage of 1902 – 19017, to explore his views concerning the national issue, in particular, to identify the key factors in the Ukrainians’ national revival, who were in Petliura’s field of view during his socio-political worldview formation. The Methodology of the Research is based on the principles of historicism, objectivity, comprehensiveness and integrity, systematicity, as well as the use of numerous methods – analysis and synthesis, historical comparative, historical typological, problem chronological. The scientific novelty consists in S. Petliura’s views comprehensive coverage concerning the role of education, science, culture, journalism, book publishing in the Ukrainians national development process, determining S. Petliura’s worldview religious component of the Ukrainian Movement at the beginning of the XXth century, S. Petliura’s social democratic and national components’ worldview paradigm correlation at the stage of his personality formation. The Conclusions. S. Petliura’s creative heritage demonstrates the multi-vector nature of his public interests even before the Ukrainian national revolution breakout in 1917 – 1921. At the same time, the national issues dominated on the pages of S. Petliura’s early publications. According to the activist, the Ukrainian school of science, literature, theater, journalism, and book publishing should have promoted the Ukrainians national
The Problem Statement. Symon Petliura played one of the key roles in the Ukrainian statehood revival in 1917 – 1920. His figure left a strong imprint on the Ukrainian revolution’s course and character of 1917 – 1920. Furthermore, S. Petliura’s journalistic legacy of 1902 – 1917 depicted the future Chief Ataman and the Ukrainian People’s Republic Directory Chairman worldview formation. The analysis of his early works in the context of views on the national development contributed to a deeper understanding of the Ukrainian Movement at the beginning of the XXth century, the Ukrainian intelligentsia national identity development of that time, the history of Ukrainian socio-political thought of that period and prominent statesman comprehensive characteristic.

The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications. Numerous modern Ukrainian researchers dealt with Symon Petliura’s social political views issue at the beginning of the XXth century, for example, V. Serhiychuk (Sergiychuk, 2004), S. Lytvyn (Lytvyn, 2018),...
The national development of Ukraine in Symon Petliura’s publicist legacy of 1902 – 1917


Some aspects of the Ukrainians national development in S. Petliura’s journalism were covered in the works of A. Zavadovskyi (Zavadovskyi, 1999), L. Baraban (Baraban, 1997), N. Sydorenko (Sydorenko, 1994), V. Hrytsuk (Hrytsuk, 1998), A. Tkachuk (Tkachuk, 1994), T. Sheptytska (Sheptytska, 2005), B. Boltivets (Boltivets, 1997), Yu. Bezkravnyi (Bezkravnyi, 2016), u. Kolisnyk (Kolisnyk, 2016), V. Polumysna (Polumysna, 2014), at the same time S. Petliura’s views concerning the role of education, culture, language, religion in the period 1902 – 1917 are poorly studied and require the detailed study. It should be mentioned that the fourth and fifth volumes publication of his works edited by V. Serhiychuk (Petliura, 2006), (Petliura, 2016) were an important factor in studying S. Petliura’s worldview, as the above-mentioned works illustrated S. Petliura’s views on the Ukrainians national development at the beginning of the XXth century.

The purpose of the publication is to analyze Symon Petliura’s journalistic heritage of 1902 – 1917, to explore his views concerning the national issue, in particular, to identify the key factors in the Ukrainians’ national revival, who were in Petliura’s field of view during his socio-political worldview formation.

The Main Material Statement. Symon Petliura at a fairly young age, at the time of his formation as a politician, assessed the Ukrainians national identity state objectively, comparing the Ukrainian society political state with the “embryo” (Petliura, 2016, p. 134). The words written by Symon Petliura in 1907, seem to be prophetic that the Ukrainian people will have to go through a difficult and thorny path before they obtain all the necessary guarantees for the national law’s free development (Petliura, 2016, p. 135). According to S. Petliura, the starting point of the national revival was its obligatory precondition for the education’s nationalization. The renowned figure noted the “abnormal Russification state of education” in Ukraine (Petliura, 2016, p. 136), S. Petliura spoke of the need to Ukrainianize education at all levels, “from lower to higher” (Petliura, 2016, p. 209). Furthermore, he noted the Ukrainian departments’ emergence in universities, the Ukrainian students’ performances demanding the Ukrainization of education, praised Kyiv University students’ appeal, Hlukhov Institute students, where they required teaching in Ukrainian and the Ukrainian studies introduction (Petliura, 2016, pp. 139–140).

Hence, the need for nationalization of education in S. Petliura was inextricably linked with the workers and peasants class rights. The combination of class and national components of S. Petliura’s worldview, which characterized him as a Ukrainian Social Democrat, illustrated the thesis from S. Petliura’s article written in 1907: “The struggle for the right to a national school and culture is as necessary for the Ukrainian proletariat as and the struggle for the improvement of the economic living conditions of the working class, and must go hand in hand with the latter, for only with free national development can there be the development of class consciousness” (Petliura, 2016, p. 137). The Ukrainization of higher education issue was inextricably linked with the “the Ukrainian proletariat class struggle” (Petliura, 2016, p. 137).

Moreover, the Ukrainian students occupied a significant place in Petliura’s journalistic legacy. Petliura believed that the students should become the driving force concerning the Ukrainian society’s change, the Ukrainian Movement further development should lead to the students Ukrainianization and its transformation into a “conscious national force” (Petliura, 2016, p. 155).

The main idea that could be traced through all his early works on the Ukrainian people’s education was formulated in the article “The Russian cultural and educational institutions in Ukraine”: “education in Ukraine must be national” (Petliura, 1956, p. 72). He considered
education in the native language a necessary condition for the Ukrainian nation development, otherwise, without its own school, the nation, according to S. V. Petliura, was doomed. He wrote about this in 1907: “Having no school of its own, no national institutions, the genius of an oppressed nation languishes, its wings are forcibly cut off, and the nation itself quickly goes to denationalization, does not develop, but perishes, does not flourish, and slowly freezes” (Petliura, 1956, p. 64). S. Petliura believed that another’s “culture” destroyed the children’s soul and brain (Petliura, 1956, p. 65). The truth of the words of the prominent statesman was confirmed by modern events, because the Russian aggression became possible in those regions of Ukraine, where there was an absolute minority of schools with the Ukrainian as the language of instruction.

S. Petliura praised the Synod decree on the Ukrainian language instruction’s introduction in the church-parish schools in Podilsk hubernia (province) and in Vinnytsia church-teacher school, but pointed out its limitations, as such norms should be extended to all Ukraine and finance the Ukrainianization of education from the state budget, not local communities. Because the Ukrainian population paid taxes to the Russian state’s budget, and therefore had the right to return these taxes in the form of the national school maintenance (Petliura, 2016, p. 227). S. Petliura substantiated consistently the right to a national school, science, culture by economic factors.

It should be mentioned that an important factor in the Ukrainian nation development was the Ukrainian science, according to the figure, science should have practical significance, meet the Ukrainian society’s needs. Arguing with the rector of Kyiv University, Professor Tsytovych, S. Petliura emphasized the economic grounds for the higher education Ukrainianization in Ukraine, as taxes were collected from the Ukrainian people, which must be returned to Ukraine in the form of financing useful affairs for the Ukrainians development (Petliura, 2006, p. 89). As a result, the Ukrainian departments were introduced in Ukrainian universities, in particular, Kyiv University (Petliura, 2006, p. 90).

It should be noted that Symon Petliura himself intended to obtain higher education at Kharkiv University, S. Petliura asked about the possibility of entering the university in a letter to Professor Sumtsov (Petliura, 2006, p. 98). Although his intention was not destined to be realized, but the high school, the student movement was always in the field of view of the figure.

Describing “The Ukrainian Scientific Society” in Kyiv, S. Petliura noted that it was to play both a scientific and public role, become a consolidating institution for scientists in various fields of knowledge and bring significant benefits to the Ukrainian people’s national and cultural development (Petliura, 2016, pp. 176–177). Comparing S. Petliura’s assessment of the Scientific Society in Kyiv in 1907 and in 1914, we can spot that in 1907 S. Petliura only formulated tasks for the scientists (the publishing house establishment at the society, the Ukrainian scientists congress organization, holding public lectures on various Ukrainian studies topics, the Ukrainian textbooks creation, the study of economic relations in Ukraine, the scientific justification of the need for autonomy of Ukraine, etc. (Petliura, 2016, pp. 179–181), in 1914 called on broad circles of the Ukrainian society to create a national scientific fund, which served the needs of the scientific society, the library and museum he founded. According to the activist, the charitable contributions of all concerned Ukrainians should become the sources of filling such a fund. The material support of the society would contribute to the museum’s and library’s transformation at the society into national public institutions, creation of its own premises, opening of scientific offices in various fields of scientific knowledge, collection of manuscripts, family archives, antiquities, the Ukrainian prominent figures’ memoirs (Petliura, 2016, pp. 280–281). The National Scientific Society
existence issue should become the national question of “honor and freedom” (Petliura, 2016, pp. 279–280). In this context, S. Petliura’s views on the need to finance the national scientific institutions at the expense of the conscious Ukrainians were close to his contemporary Yevhen Chykalenko: “We need to love Ukraine not only to the depths of our souls, but also to the depths of our own pockets”.

In addition to it, Symon Petliura did not ignore the pages of his publications and works of art. He was a supporter of realism in art and believed that the art’s task was to cover the real socio-economic conditions of the people’s life. Until 1917, the convinced socialist Symon Petliura approached the a work of art’s evaluation exclusively from the ideological positions (Petliura, 1993, p. 19).

The theater occupied a special place in the S. Petliura’s worldview, as he was a theater critic (Drum, 1997, p. 150). Moreover, S. Petliura regarded the theater also from a socialist standpoint until 1917. “The theatrical art has not only aesthetic significance – the theater is also a huge social force”, he wrote in an article dedicated to Maria Zankovetska’s stage anniversary (Petliura, 1956, p. 145). Even describing I. Karpenko-Kary’s dramatic legacy, S. Petliura criticized the author for not depicting in his works the struggle “waged by the working class for new living conditions, in which the whole meaning of its life is concentrated” (Petliura, 1956, p. 15).

The preface to E. Chirikov’s play “The Jews” of 1907 was the embodiment of young S. Petliura’s particularly vivid socialist views concerning the Ukrainian theater. S. Petliura emphasized the following: “The attention of these writers was not attracted by the great struggle that has now become dominant in the arena of socio-political life of all countries and nations – the class struggle” (Petliura, 1993, p. 46). He accused the Ukrainian playwrights of “bourgeoisie” and “philistinism”, of not understanding the spiritual needs of the proletariat, emphasizing that the bourgeoisie was far from life, that’s why the proletariat hated them (Petliura, 1993, p. 48). The whole work was imbued with the socialist rhetoric and illustrated S. Petliura’s socialist views, which were inherent in his assessment of most social phenomena during 1902 – 1917.

S. Petliura stated the current problem of the provincial Ukrainian theater: the limited repertoire. The theater, in his opinion, was to develop according to world trends, its repertoire should include the best examples of world drama (Petliura, 1956, p. 154). Assessing the life and work of Ukrainian theater actors, he wrote the following: “The laws of civic development are the same everywhere; they dig a deep chasm between the class of proletarians, workers and the class of wealthy dukes, capitalists. As long as there is oppression of the Ukrainian capital over the Ukrainian worker, from this oppression in the organization, in the comradely defense of their rights” (Petliura, 1956, p. 76).

Hence, Symon Petliura, engaged in journalism, socio-political activities, was aware of the humanitarian component importance in the society’s development. According to S. Petliura, science, education, culture should not develop separately from the needs of the nation, but should promote the national revival, the Young Socialist S. Petliura noted that the Ukrainian culture, in particular, the theater, should also contribute to the class struggle of the working class.

S. Petliura’s creative heritage demonstrates the multi-vector nature of his public interests at a young age. In addition, social processes in the Russian Empire were analyzed by S. Petliura in his early publications through the socialist views’ prism. From a class standpoint, S. Petliura also evaluated works of fiction. He responded positively if they were socially determined from his point of view, like Leonid Andreev’s “The Red Laughter” (Petliura, 2006, pp. 45–46). Conversely, he criticized V. Vynnychenko’s play “The Steps of Life”, which, according to S. Petliura, did not solve important social problems (Petliura, 1979, p. 70).
S. Petliura also sets socially determined tasks for the Ukrainian book publishers. In general, praising the activities of Kyiv “Prosvita” in 1907, in particular the competition for the best pamphlet on autonomy, at the same time noted what issues should be devoted to the Ukrainian literature: agriculture, the Ukrainian workers, peasants, political freedoms lives (Petliura, 2016, pp. 159). Instead of books about the life of other countries, S. Petliura advised to publish books on the Ukrainians national life, arguing that it is an urgent need for the Ukrainian people. He stressed out that the popular publications on topical issues of economic, political, national and class life of Ukrainians “can not wait”, so they should be published first (Petliura, 2016, p. 160).

The theme, which was reflected on Petliura’s early works’ pages was the Ukrainian press analysis, analyzing it mostly from a class standpoint, Petliura stated its great importance for the Ukrainian society development, the national identity development (Petliura, 2016, p. 217). To intensify the Ukrainian National Movement, S. Petliura advised to use the press published in Ukraine in Russian, in order to prevent the “Russian assimilation” of the Ukrainians (Petliura, 2016, p. 271). Although, in the future, the Ukrainian-language press should dominate the territory of Ukraine, during the period Ukrainian growth, the Russian press should become Ukrainianized, if not in language, then in content, and contribute to the quantitative increase of the conscious Ukrainians (Petliura, 2016, p. 274).

Furthermore, S. Petliura’s characteristic feature was traced, in particular, the use of all existing means to resolve the national issue and obtain positive results for the national cause, using all possible factors.

Thus, the fiction, as well as the press, science, theater, should be aimed at the Ukrainian people’s national development and the social issues’ solution through the social democratic ideology prism.

It should be stated that I. Franko’s work had a great influence on S. Petliura’s worldview principles formation. Values of an exclusively national character filled S. Petliura’s work, which was called “I. Franko – a poet of national honor” (Petliura, 1956, pp. 160–179). Analyzing the socio-political concept of the great poet, and that was what S. Petliura considered him, he introduced the concept of the “national honor” – an inextinguishable guide to national development. S. Petliura noted the following: “These days, by the way, it will be a reminder of the sense of national honor, which must be dear to the nation, just as everyone has a dear sense of personal honor, personal dignity” (Petliura, 1956, p. 174).

S. Petliura, like I. Franko, considered the slavish consciousness to be the most terrible disaster, the greatest enemy of the Ukrainian people, and the conscious Ukrainians efforts should be directed to that negative phenomenon, because otherwise any ascetic activity will be defeated. Prophetic, in relation S. Petliura’s future state building activity, in the vortex of which he will fall four years after the publication of the article, we can consider his following words: “You can pity the slave and sympathize with him; it is possible to explain the features of the slave psychology in later free generations, but to live with them, but always to be among them and go with them to a common goal – is impossible” (Petliura, 1956, p. 170).

S. Petliura analyzed the Ukrainians spiritual state and its development comprehensively. The statements, identification of causes and consequences, identification of ways to overcome, sharp criticism, such phenomena as low national identity of the Ukrainians, the national elites betrayal, lack of patriotism, the spiritual nihilism, a large number of works by S. Petliura. He came to the conclusion that these phenomena have deep historical roots, the beginning of which he connected with the time of Hetman I. Bryukhovetskyi, who “sold his Ukraine for sweets and Moscow gifts, despised its honor and the interests of his people” (Petliura, 2006, p. 53). According to S. Petliura’s article “On the Little Russians” (the Malorosy) that the difficult national situation
in which Ukraine found itself at the beginning of the XXth century was led by the activities of the Ukrainians themselves – “the traitors” (Petliura, 2006, pp. 53–54), followed by the following denationalized generation of “Little Russians” (“malorosy”) (Petliura, 2016, p. 56).

Even at the beginning of his socio-political activity S. Petliura was interested in the problems of religion and the church. In his early publications we can trace a positive attitude to the Christianity issues, and an understanding of faith as an inner state of man. But he criticized the Russian clergy activities as a reactionary tool of the Tsarist regime. In particular, in an article on the publication of the Bible in Ukrainian in London, S. Petliura noted that the Bible translated by P. Kulish and I. Levitskyi into Ukrainian was not published in the Russian Empire due to opposition from the Russian Synod (Petliura, 2006, p. 19). In a critical article on the establishment in Russia of societies for the revival of church and public life in 1903, S. Petliura called the Russian clergy an element that tainted itself with betrayal of the people’s interests and “extinguisher of all that has in common mind, the light and the truth ...” (Petliura, 2006, p. 33).

In a review on A. Pruhavin’s book on the monastic prisons in Russia, Symon Petliura considered the the Russian church position in relation to the other religions “inquisitorial” representatives. He condemned the methods and techniques used by the Russian clergy in the struggle against the believers of other religions, “free religious thought” (Petliura, 2016, pp. 164–165). S. Petliura stated the unexplored phenomenon of the Protestantism in Ukraine in its various forms and manifestations, and the numerous Ukrainian Protestants’ persecutions by the church and the secular Russian authorities (Petliura, 2016, pp. 164–165). S. Petliura also mentioned the Ukrainian political prisoners in Russian monastic prisons, in particular the last Kosh Ataman of the Zaporizhzhya Sich, Petro Kalnyshevskyi.

Thus, in general, assessing the people’s right to freedom of conscience positively, S. Petliura noted the punitive and repressive nature of the Russian Orthodox Church, its subordination to the secular imperial power.

S. Petliura’s interest in religious issues at a young age was confirmed by his work “The Religious Statistics”, where he compared his current statistics on the religious affiliation of the world’s population and statistics of the previous century (Petliura, 2006, pp. 40–41). He stated a proportional increase in the number of representatives of each of the world’s religions (Petliura, 2006, p. 40).

Numerous references to the biblical texts in his works testify to a certain religious component of S. Petliura’s worldview. His articles dedicated to the Russian Empire’s current socio economic problems contained quotations from the Bible. For example, S. Petliura’s article on the political line of the Octobrists on the 17th of December in1906, entitled “The Lord Teaches Babies and Opens the Eyes of Even the Blind” (Petliura, 2006, pp. 93–96), where S. Petliura called King David “wise”, and his above statement “the great truth” (Petliura, 2016, p. 93). This fact seems especially interesting, considering that S. Petliura was a socialist, a member of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Workers’ Party since December 1905, the USDRP program provided for the separation of religion from the state, schools from the church (Shevchenko, 1993, p. 41). V. Vynnychenko, S. Petliura’s renowned co-member of the party, was hostile and even mocked the religion and church issues. According to V. I. Ulyanovskyi, V. Vynnychenko emphasized that he was a socialist and did not recognize the church in principle (Ulyanovskyi, 1997, p. 39). The interest in religion was an atypical phenomenon for the Ukrainian socialists at the beginning of the XXth century, which was mainly in the atheistic positions (Ulyanovskyi, 1997, p. 42).

S. Petliura’s considerable attention to religious issues can be explained by his studies at the seminary, where he received a thorough knowledge of Theology and Canon Law, as well
as family origin (grandfather was an Orthodox hieromonk, grandmother – a nun and abbess, brothers – Poltava Theological Seminary graduates) (Serhiychuk, 2004, p. 7).

The Conclusions. S. Petliura’s creative heritage demonstrated the multi-vector nature of his public interests even before the Ukrainian national revolution breakout in 1917 – 1921. At the same time, the national issues dominated on S. Petliura’s early publications pages. According to the activist, the Ukrainian school of science, literature, theater, journalism, and book publishing should have promoted the Ukrainians national self-identification development, awareness of the need to achieve Ukrainian autonomy among the broad circles of the Ukrainians, and the class struggle of workers and peasants. According to S. Petliura, the humanitarian component of the social process had to be socially determined, meet the Ukrainian people’s needs on the national revival and the socialist ideals establishment. S. Petliura considered the Ukrainian people’s further national development through the prism of social-democratic postulates. S. Petliura’s worldview of that period was also characterized by a religious component, which was not characteristic of the Ukrainian socialists at the beginning of the XXth century.

Acknowledgements. The authors would like to express sincere gratitude to all members of the editorial board for the given advice during the preparation of the article for publishing.

Funding. The authors did not receive financial assistance for research, preparation and publication of the article.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


The article was received June 06, 2020. Article recommended for publishing 19/05/2021.