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THE CONCEPT OF "DENAZIFICATION" IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INFORMATION COMPONENT OF THE MODERN RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR

Abstract. The purpose of the paper is to consider the concept of "denazification" from a historical perspective and follow the current course of its use by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. **The Methodology of the Research.** In the article there have been used the methods of analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparative method, methods of historical hermeneutics, and semiotic analysis. **The scientific novelty**: for the first time, the concept of "denazification" has been comprehensively analyzed from a historical perspective and studied in the context of the information component of the modern Russian-Ukrainian war. **The Conclusion.** The "denazification" of post-war Germany, along with the task of punishing those guilty of the Nazi crimes, also pursued a "humanitarian" operation to re-educate the Germans after the war and reformat their information and virtual systems under the coercion and control of the victorious states – members of the anti-Hitler coalition, primarily the USA, the USSR, Great Britain and France. The denazification programme was initially reduced to several key blocks: the impossibility of Nazism re-enactment through the liquidation of the Nazi agencies and the

legal dismissal of the Nazis and militarists from public posts and positions of the highest importance; liquidation of the Nazi ideology, the Nazi party, its formations, affiliated associations and supervised organizations; abrogation of all laws and regulations which establish discriminations on grounds of race, nationality, creed, or political opinions; demilitarization; denazification of education; arrests and internment of members of the Nazi organizations. Due to the relative "softness" of denazification, especially in the Western occupation zones, modern historiography often points at its "farce" and even "sabotage". However, the determination to implement relevant policy in the humanitarian sphere (education, mass media, art, public discourse, etc.) yielded fruit – nowadays Germany is one of the leaders of the democratic world. Instead, the Russian Federation, whose predecessor, the USSR, denazified the East German occupation zone, has turned into a terrorist state. Paradoxically, it produces the ideas of the "denazification of Ukraine", declaring the practical desovereignization of the Ukrainian state (up to its annihilation) and the latest genocide of the Ukrainian people.

Key words: *denazification, Germany, occupation zones, Ukraine, Russian Federation, war.*

КОНЦЕПТ "ДЕНАЦИФІКАЦІЯ" У КОНТЕКСТІ ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОЇ СКЛАДОВОЇ СУЧАСНОЇ РОСІЙСЬКО-УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ ВІЙНИ

Анотація. Мета статті *полягає у розгляді концепту "денацифікація" з точки зору історичної перспективи та простеженні ходу його використання Російською Федерацією проти України на сучасному етапі.* ***Методи.*** *У роботі використано методи аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення, порівняльний, історичної герменевтики та семіотичного аналізу.* ***Наукова новизна****: вперше комплексно проаналізовано концепт "денацифікація" з історичної перспективи та його дослідження у контексті інформаційної складової сучасної російського-української війни.* ***Висновки.*** *"Денацифікація" повоєнної Німеччини, поряд із завданням покарання винних за нацистські злочини, мала на меті ще й "гуманітарну" операцію з перевиховання німців після війни та переформатування їхніх інформаційних і віртуальних систем під примусом та контролем держав-переможниць – учасників антигітлерівської коаліції, насамперед, США, СРСР, Великобританії, Франції. Початково превентивні заходи з денацифікації зводилися до декількох ключових блоків: унеможливлення відтворення нацизму через ліквідацію нацистських структур і юридичне виключення нацистів і мілітаристів з державних посад та відповідальних постів; ліквідація нацистської ідеології, нацистської партії, її формувань, афілійованих асоціаціай і відповідних їм організацій; скасування усіх законів та інших нормативних актів, що запроваджували й закріплювали дискримінацію за ознакою раси, національності, віросповідання або політичних переконань; демілітаризація; денацифікація освіти; арешти та інтернування членів нацистських організацій. Через відносну "м'якість" денацифікації, особливо в західних окупаційних зонах, сьогодні в історіографії часто говорять про її "фарс" та навіть "саботаж". Однак рішучість у реалізації цієї політики в гуманітарній сфері (освіті, ЗМІ, мистецтві, публічному дискурсі тощо) дали таки помітний результат – Німеччина сьогодні є одним із лідерів демократичного світу. Натомість Російська Федерація, чий попередник СРСР денацифікував східну німецьку окупаційну зону, сама сьогодні перетворилась на державу-терориста, яка, як не парадоксально, продукує ідеї "денацифікації України", які декларують вже у цілком практичній площині завдання із десуверенізації Української держави (аж до її повного знищення) та новітнього геноциду українського народу.*

Ключові слова: *денацифікація, Німеччина, окупаційні зони, Україна, Російська Федерація, війна.*

The Problem Statement. Along with a "hot" component of the modern war unleashed by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, its information component is equally active. Moreover, the latter often not only complements the Russian military campaign on the Ukrainian territory but also has been a preliminary to many actions, especially the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022. The above mentioned event encourages Ukrainian researchers to analyze the content of Russian information messages and their ideological origins. This is

particularly important considering that in addition to, at first glance, the exclusive production of theoretical anti-Ukrainian doctrines, which have captured the information space of the Russian Federation in recent decades, it developed political concepts declaring the practical desovereignization of the Ukrainian state (up to its annihilation) and the latest genocide of the Ukrainian people. Needless to say, these go hand in hand with a radical rewriting of the history of Ukraine and the West countries by the Russian scholars, as their works seek to substantiate and justify the current actions of the Russian authorities on the modern geopolitical chessboard, and attempts to use concepts of the past in current aspirations to influence other societies for their further transformation. For this reason, Russia employed the post-war concept of denazification – a system of measures used by the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition after the end of World War II to liberate the economy, politics, culture, media, and jurisprudence of the former Third Reich (Germany and Austria) from the influence and consequences of national socialism. In Russian propaganda discourse, the term "denazification" was increasingly used in recent years, not in the field of history but when considering the future Russian strategy toward Ukraine. As a result, narratives about the need to "denazify" Ukraine were peculiar to the rhetoric of the Russian political leadership. Moreover, it was highlighted by the Russian President Vladimir Putin, announcing the beginning of the so-called "special military operation" – a full-scale war in reality.

Under such circumstances, insight into the concept of "denazification" and its application in the current information component of the Russian-Ukrainian war will allow laying the groundwork for further Ukraine's development of efficient counter-propaganda tools in the fight against the enemy and, at the same time, for the preparation of the future International Tribunal over the Russian Federation, which currently promotes the Nazi ideas and the geopolitical vision of the world and which must be truly denazified after its military defeat.

The Analysis of Recent Research. Both the history of "denazification" activities in post-war Germany and the course of manipulative use of this concept under modern conditions by the Russian Federation amidst its armed aggression against Ukraine and possible ways of the denazification of Russia have already been partially considered in historiography. Various aspects of the topic concerned were studied by M. Boyko and O. Ivanov (Boyko & Ivanov, 2018), P. Biddiscombe (Biddiscombe, 2006), B. Bonvech (Bonvech, 2017), Yu. Galaktionov (Galaktionov, 2005), M. Kryhel (Kryhel, 2022), T. Kupriy (Kupriy, 2018), O. Zharonkina (Zharonkina, 2008), E. Davidson (Davidson, 1959), J. Dobbins with colleagues from the American analytical center "RAND Corporation" (Dobbins, 2003; Dobbins, 2005; Dobbins, 2008), E. Plischke (Plischke, 1947), H. Pocheptsov (Pocheptsov, 2015), I. Syvachenko (Syvachenko, 2010), and the others. However, there is no comprehensive analysis of the denazification concept and its study in the context of the information component of the modern Russian-Ukrainian war. Thus, this article is one of the first attempts in the relevant focus area.

The purpose of the article is to consider the concept of "denazification" from a historical perspective and follow the current course of its use by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

The Research Results. After a complete and unconditional surrender of Hitler's Germany in World War II, one of the core components of the post-war arrangement of the world was the implementation of the denazification policy in that state. It provided for compliance with the measures of a strict control over the social life of the Germans, in particular, the dismissal of the Nazi figures from the bodies of the state council, educational institutions, and public discourse as a whole.

Therefore, in addition to the need to punish those guilty of the Nazi crimes, the case touched on a "humanitarian" operation intending to re-educate the Germans after the war and reformat their information and virtual systems under the coercion and control of the victorious states – members of the anti-Hitler coalition, first of all, the USA, the USSR, Great Britain, and France. In this context, the words of political scientist K. Wasmund seem proper "denazification and re-education, in the Allies' original idea, were as closely related to each other as a piston and cylinder". It was supposed to educate and re-educate adults, especially children and young people, in dedicated democracies with the help of reliable Germans with politically undamaged reputations, the church, the press, radio, and cinema" (Kun, 2007, p. 44).

The course of denazification consisted of several stages.

The first of them actually began as early as April of 1945. At that moment, the Allied armies' military practiced "shock therapy" following the presumption of guilt of each adult German: they forced the German population to inspect the concentration camps liberated in their area and be engaged in the reburial of the dead prisoners. "Daily work norms" were prescribed for such sites: women were supposed to "work" for at least 5 working days, men – 10, and the most notorious supporters of national socialism took part in reburying for several months. That sort of practice among allies was initiated by the U. S. General-in-Chief W. Walker, who thus punished the leadership of Ohrdruf – liberated by the US Army on April 4, 1945 – forcing them to visit the local camp (Bonvech, 2017, p. 99).

For the first time in the legal dimension, denazification measures were set out in the JCS Directive 1067 as of April 26, 1945, which were reduced to several key blocks:

1)	the impossibility of the reproduction of Nazism through the elimination of its formations and the legal exclusion of Nazis or militarists from public office and from positions of importance in priority enterprises to prevent the uprise of those who could re-establish Nazism, the annihilation of the personal incorporation of the population into the Nazi political system;

2)	elimination of the Nazi ideology, the Nazi party, its formations, affiliated associations and supervised organizations;

3) abrogation of all laws and regulations which establish discriminations on grounds of race, nationality, creed, or political opinions;

4)	demilitarization, i.e., the dissolution of all militarized armed organizations of the Nazi party, political police, armed forces, emergency and other courts;

5)	denazification of education, which provided for: a public process of clearing the entire teaching staff from the Nazi ideology at all levels; a ban on teaching in high and secondary schools for Nazis; suspending the latter from the instruments shaping public opinion (first of all, the media); limiting the influence of former German National Socialists on culture, literature, and art (a temporary ban on publications and creativity); a ban on the use of curricula based on the Nazi and/or militarist doctrines; reinterpretation (de facto, rewriting) of the entire pre-war history of Germany.

6)	arrests and internment of members of the Nazi organizations, conviction and criminal prosecution of Nazis, primarily ideologists and senior officials, trials of war criminals, an international military tribunal (Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive, 1945).

In parallel, the Allies started surveying the German population in 1945 – in the American and British occupation zones. Thus, in the British zone, respondents were proposed to answer 133 questions, and in the American one – 131. The survey results were to represent a level and degree of personal incorporation of German society into the National Socialist system.

Real prison terms or monetary fines were supposed for false data in the questionnaire form, and non-granting of ration stamps and permits for the registration of residence, rental housing and employment for attempts to evade the questionnaire (Zharonkina, 2008, p. 65).

Based on the survey results, the German population was divided into 5 categories: 1 – principal culprits, 2 – those responsible, 3 – partially responsible, 4 – fellow travelers, 5 – innocent. However, respondents' insincerity during a survey, the physical impossibility of qualitatively processing almost 25 million questionnaires for the adult population of the two occupation zones, and the corruption component made their findings scarcely accurate. Moreover, less than 1% of respondents received a prison term because of responses in the questionnaires, and more than 75% paid only a monetary fine for their complicity in establishing the Third Reich (Dobbins, 2008, p. 124).

At the same time, they launched the Nuremberg trial which, in addition to cases involving the main defendants (key Nazi politicians, military and Nazi ideologists), included twelve other trials in parallel, e.g., the cases of doctors, lawyers, concentration camp officials, cases against industrialists who supported the Nazi regime, leaders of racist programs, military formations exterminating the Jews, etc. However, despite their scale, of all accusations, only 5.133 people appeared before the courts in the western occupation zones: 668 defendants were sentenced to death, but not all of them were executed (Lebedeva, 2007; Plischke. 1947, pp. 154–169).

There were also miscalculations in other directions of denazification. Therefore, confusion in cases against people who held senior positions in the SS or the Nazi party arose: lower-rank defendants were more often prosecuted as the evidence base toward them was collected faster than toward influential figures, whose cases were constantly suspended. As a result, after 1948 – when denazification actually ceased in the western zones of German occupation – most of these officials got away with objective punishments (Zharonkina, 2008, p. 67).

On the other hand, by the beginning of 1946, there appeared conflictual consequences in terms of extremely strict and unreasonable criteria for prohibiting the employment of former members of the National Socialist Workers' Party of Germany – even those who affiliated with it pro forma but were competent in their fields of expertise. Thus, chaos in the administration and economy of some regions of Germany driven by a lack of professional personnel began (Schwabe). This prompted the allies, particularly in the western occupation zones, to reconsider their decisions. Hence, cases of the former Nazis' re-employment – after awarding their acquittals, which recorded that a certain person played a minor role in the criminal activities of the National Socialists – became widespread (Boiko & Ivanov, 2018, pp. 72–74).

In March and October of 1946, a set of directives by the Allied Control Council, which formed the legal foundations of the social component of the denazification policy, were declared. A key one was the document known today as "Law No. 104". In fact, it outlined the onset of the second stage of overcoming Nazism in Germany. Its preamble stated: "This law hands the denazification case to the Germans and is an originally fundamental political law... intending to replace temporary measures with a final political purge" (Schullze, 1948).

Accordingly, since that time, German courts have begun to consider cases against the accused in the four zones of occupation. For this purpose, the "Commission for the Detection of War Criminals" and ad hoc tribunal courts, which determined a degree of individual involvement in the Nazi crimes, were established. They should have stepped up the progress of cases, especially with the involvement of German judges, investigators, and prosecutors, because there was a lack of relevant specialists with knowledge of the German language among administration representatives at the occupation zones that also partially inhibited

their consideration. In the end, the above increased the pace – the courts considered almost 3.6 million cases in the western occupation zones by 1949. However, one in six of the indicated number was found guilty to some extent, and only 1.600 people were found to be the principal culprits (Statistical Annex, 1949, p. 280).

In this context, amnesty cases, which were proclaimed in the western occupation zones in the second half of 1946 ("youth" – for people born after January 1, 1919, and "Christmas" – for the disabled and low-income people) had partial consequences, which commenced the third stage in the denazification course (Zharonkina, 2008, p. 65).

The fourth stage began at the turn of 1947 – 1948 when the West allowed German tribunals to reclassify anyone who was not among the principal culprits (there was an absolute majority of them) into "fellow travellers" that significantly reduced the risks of receiving a severe penalty (Germany under Occupation, 1949, pp. 172–173). That fact played a dirty trick: as historian L. Niethammer put it, because of the opportunity to buy the necessary documents for a bribe, the denazification turned even faster into a "factory producing fellow travellers" (Niethammer, 1982, p. 537).

The situation was somewhat different in Soviet-occupied Germany, where denazification actually transformed into the "Sovietization of East Germany". Thus, they organized 10 special camps, which held 150 thousand prisoners (Leozyna, 2018, p. 200). Yesterday's SS officers, storm-troopers, and security personnel were confined in prisoner-of-war camps, and some of them were sent for forced labor to the USSR and socialist camp countries. Under such circumstances, more than 44.000 detainees (about 29% of the total) died suffering from intolerable detention conditions and various diseases. The Soviet administration had a better attitude toward former rank-and-file members of the Nazi party, who had more opportunities to integrate into the new post-war society in East Germany (Voigt, 2000, pp. 23–25).

Such configuration favourably overlapped with the Soviet ideological component: like yesterday's Nazi criminals from among industrialists and large landowners who had brought A. Hitler to power became a thing of the past, and ordinary workers and peasants who did not take a direct part in such crimes should have formed the basis of a new Germany (Hudkov, 2004, pp. 432–433).

In addition, government agencies and secondary and high schools were substantially cleaned of the "Nazi elements": more than half a million people were dismissed from 1945 – 1948. Consequently, people without legal training but with impeccable, from the Soviet point of view, political started employment with the newly created 1945 Ministry of Justice and the people's courts, which emerged because of the 1946 judicial reform (Voigt, 2000, p. 47).

At the same time, all four occupation zones were equally radically-minded toward a humanitarian component of denazification: an academic staff, including the Germans who returned from emigration, was considerably renewed everywhere; the curricula of middle and higher studios were rewritten; censorship of books and textbooks prepared by the Germans was in effect; the interpretation of German history changed dramatically: it was emphasized the formation of democratization processes (in the case of the eastern zone – the theses about the development of class struggle) in these territories since the Peasant War of 1524 – 1525 as their starting point through the history of the 19th century with the adoption of the Constitution of 1848 to the Weimar Republic and 1945 as the culmination of the victory of democracy in Germany (Kupriy, 2018, p. 52).

Much attention was also paid to organized leisure and the media: in post-war Germany, the occupation authorities initiated democratic and liberal theatre, music, fine arts, cinema, literature, and the press (in particular, "The New Newspaper" was founded in the American

occupation zone, which immediately had a circulation of 2.5 million copies); the media published propaganda posters depicting the Nazi war crimes with captions "This is your fault!"; the first German post-war feature film by W. Staudte "The Murderers are Among Us" was released in 1947 – it contained appropriate anti-Nazi messages for the German population (Davidson, 1959, p. 79).

In the aggregate, such measures should have achieved a clear goal, namely: "Germany shall change into a country of civilians where everyone will have the opportunity to show their initiative... We will accomplish physical demilitarization, but it cannot guarantee that Germany will not drag the world into war again. All the people around the Earth treat war as something immoral, but the Germans must be re-educated to understand such self-evident truth. In this regard, it is up to the Germans to eradicate the dangerous sprouts of their philosophy" (Schildt & Siegfried, 2009, p. 138).

Therefore, despite the evident miscalculations in the overwhelming purposed, legal punishment of the German population for supporting the long-term policy of the Third Reich, democratic intensities of the denazification campaign (at least in the western occupation zones) yielded fruit. More than 70 years after the completion of denazification (it was officially announced in February of 1948 in the eastern occupation zone and in the summer of 1948 in the western ones, although some court cases lasted until 1949), Germany is one of the leaders of the Western democratic world and Ukraine's partners in the fight against the Russian aggressor.

Paradoxically the latter, applying a whole armory of prohibited methods of warfare (say nothing of the violation of the norms of international peace order), increasingly uses the term "denazification" in its rhetoric – this time not toward Germany but Ukraine.

As far back as 2017, an article with a noteworthy title "Necessity and Inevitability of Ukraine's Denazification" was published on the Internet portal of Svobodnaya Mysl. Most likely, it was written by M. Deliahin, Doctor of Economics, Director of the Institute of Globalization Problems, Deputy Chairperson of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of RF on Economic Policy, Member of the Scientific Council under the Security Council of RF, and Editor-in-Chief of Svobodnaya Mysl.

In the article, considering the territory of "post-Maidan Ukraine" as a place where, allegedly, under the detrimental influence of the West, "violence, madness, and Russophobia are generated", the author equates the Ukrainian state with "Nazi". He argues that to prevent its complete uncontrolled disintegration, which would also be a disaster and threat to Russia, it is necessary to timely "denazify" it on the model of post-war Germany to recapture the Ukrainian part to Russia "not so much in political and administrative as in cultural-value and mental terms" (Neobkhodimost, w. d.).

The publication's author was not limited to the declaration but also proposed the "denazification concept", as follows: the need to establish an appropriate commission, which would be the supreme political authority in Ukraine for 5 years; specification of the "qualification characteristics of Ukrainian "Nazi crimes" (involving a positive assessment of the Euromaidan events and such personalities as S. Bandera and R. Shukhevych); calls for the formation of databases on "Nazi criminals in Ukraine"; clarification of the proposed "denazification procedure" and further "preventive measures" in detail, including through the "cleansing of the cultural sector" (Neobkhodimost, w. d.).

In 2017, the book of the Russian journalist A. Gasparyan "Denazification of Ukraine. The Land of Unlearned Lessons" (Denazification of Ukraine. The Land of Unlearned Lessons) was published. Among other things, the author stated that the Ukrainians did not learn lessons from historical events that resulted in "dictatorship of nationalists" – his vision of the victory

of the Revolution of Dignity. Moreover, he persuaded that Ukraine would not be able to exist as an independent state because society "would not stand the hatred of one group of citizens against the others" – consequently, there is the need for its denazification. It is noteworthy that A. Gasparyan proposed implementing it following the post-war case: first, to divide the Ukrainians into several categories based on a forced poll and subsequent trial of each of them with "further sending to filtration camps for "Nazi activity". The author called to commence the same "denazification" from the borders of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR" and gradually move to the west. However, in 2017, he did not specify whether such "movement" should take place along with the progress of the Russian army or the consolidation of pro-Russian power in Ukraine (Hasparian, 2018, pp. 158–198).

Consequently, on February 24, 2022, a narrative about the need for the "denazification of Ukraine" was also peculiar to the official rhetoric of the Russian authorities. It was declared by the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin as one of the tasks of his so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine – a full-scale war in reality. Although in May of 2022, there was information that Russia gave up on the "denazification" of Ukraine (Putin vidmovliaietsia, 2022) (apparently, they were "dissuaded" by the combat proficiency of the Armed Forces of Ukraine), the situation looks remarkable enough and even symptomatic, taking into account that only a month before, on April 3, 2022, the Russian political technologist T. Sergeytsev had speculated in detail on the Ria portal how to realize the "practical component of denazification" which, in his view, means the literal destruction of the Ukrainian state and part of its most conscious population (Serheitsev, 2022). Paradoxically the Russian Federation, whose predecessor, the USSR, denazified the East Germany occupation zone, has turned into a terrorist state, comparable to the "Third Reich" of 1933 – 1945.

The Conclusion. Thus, the "denazification" of post-war Germany, along with the task of punishing the perpetrators of Nazi crimes, also pursued a "humanitarian" operation to re-educate Germans after the war and reformat their information and virtual systems under the coercion and control of the victorious states – members of the anti-Hitler coalition, first of all, the USA, the USSR, Great Britain, and France. Denazification measures were initially reduced to several key blocks: the impossibility of the reproduction of Nazism through the elimination of its formations and the legal exclusion of Nazis or militarists from public office and from positions of importance; elimination of the Nazi ideology, the Nazi party, its formations, affiliated associations and supervised organizations; abrogation of all laws and regulations which establish discriminations on grounds of race, nationality, creed, or political opinions; demilitarization; denazification of education; arrests and internment of members of the Nazi organizations. Due to the relative "softness" of denazification, especially in the Western occupation zones, today's historiography often points to its "farce" and even "sabotage". However, the determination to implement relevant policy in the humanitarian sphere (education, mass media, art, public discourse, etc.) yielded fruit – nowadays, Germany is one of the leaders of the democratic world. Instead, the Russian Federation, whose predecessor, the USSR, denazified the East German occupation zone, has turned into a terrorist state, which paradoxically produces the ideas of "denazification of Ukraine" declaring the practical task of desovereignization of the Ukrainian state (up to its annihilation) and the latest genocide of the Ukrainian people.

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