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CERTAIN PROBLEMS OF FORMING ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS IN UKRAINE IN 1917

Дана стаття присвячена дослідженню організаційних засад, на яких ґрунтувалася діяльність перших молодіжних гуртків, які були створені у 1917 році після повалення російського самодержавства. Визначається вплив політичної ситуації того часу на становлення молодіжного руху. Особлива увага приділяється аналізу зв'язків різноманітних за політичними орієнтирами партій та юнацьких об'єднань. Основною метою своєї діяльності вони вважали створення масової молодіжної загальноукраїнської організації. Саме на вирішенні зазначеної проблеми була зосереджена організаційна діяльність юнацьких спілок.

Ключові слова: юнацтво, молодіжний рух, організація національних гуртків.

Предлагаемая статья посвящена исследованию организационных принципов, присущих первым молодежным кружкам, созданным после свержения самодержавия в России в 1917 году. Определяется влияние политической ситуации того времени на становление молодежного движения. Особое внимание уделяется анализу связей между различными по своей политической ориентации партиями и молодежными объединениями. Основной целью своей деятельности они считали создание массовой молодежной всеукраинской организации. Организационная деятельность юношеских организаций была направлена именно на решение этой проблемы.

Ключевые слова: юношество, молодежное движение, создание национальных кружков.

The article focuses on the research of the organizational principles which formed the basis for the earliest youth groups created in 1917 after the overthrow of the Russian autocracy. It also determines how the political situation of that time influenced the formation of the youth movement. Special attention is paid to analyzing relationships of parties and youth groups which had politically diverse orientations. They considered creation of an all-Ukrainian mass youth organization to be the main purpose of their activity. It was the solution of the above-mentioned problem that the organizational activity of youth associations was focused on.

Keywords: youth, youth movement, organization of national societies.

Young people in the modern Ukraine take part in political actions and in the creation of various youth associations such as the Nationalistic Congress of Youth (NCY), the Republican Christian Youth, the Young Movement, the Socialist Congress of Youth, the People's Democratic League of Youth, the Ukrainian Leninist Young Communist League, the Union of Ukrainian Youth Organizations, the Youth Organization of Ukrainian Republicans (YOUR), the Youth Organization of Ukrainian People's Movement (YOPM), the Association of Christian Democratic Youth (ACDY), Stepan Bandera Students' Brotherhood, the Liberal Youth Union (LYU), the Ukrainian Youth Association (UYA), the Ukrainian Students' Association (USA), the Association of Ukrainian Christian Democratic Youth (AUCDY) etc. [6; 8-10; 14]. Under these circumstances it is highly essential to help young people form their world view through study and realization of their country's past as well as the peculiarities of its historical development, and on this basis determine their stand in life. At the same time it is really important to make sure that young people's beliefs are devoid of either chauvinism or nationalism in their extreme forms of display, that is ideas of national advantage of one nation over another one, ideological dogmatism, extremism, forcible propagation of culture of the national majority and neglect of rights and liberties of national minorities. It is of particular importance for Ukraine as, besides Ukrainians, there is a large number of Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Tatars etc. living there.

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Efforts of all population strata in Ukraine (including studying youth) are focused on the formation of a new society. Integration of these efforts requires comprehension of the previous experience in the development of the youth movement. Only on this basis is it possible to determine practical measures which would help not only engage the young generation in the creation of a new society, but also prove to be an effective means of training of their civil and national self-consciousness. From this point of view significant interest is aroused, in particular, by the analysis of the origination, formation and functioning in 1917 of independent socio-political youth organizations with different political reference points.

The first months after the February Revolution were already marked by the appearance all over the Ukrainian territory of youth «Prosvitas», Ukrainian «youth unions», the «Moloda Ukrayina» («Young Ukraine») societies, «Ukrainian students' communities», students' associations, youth sports communities such as «Maccabi» and «Sokol» («Falcon») etc. [25, April 22, 29, November 11].

First youth communities functioned independently from each other. There was no connection between them. They believed the aim of their work lay in the attraction of as many teenagers as possible to the sphere of their influence. Creation of a mass youth organization was the only condition under which it was possible to effectively protect economical and political interests of young people, prepare the rising generation for active and conscious participation in the construction of a new society. To reach this aim it was necessary to solve a number of problems.

One of them consisted in the aim determination of an organization which would be close and understandable to the majority of young people. Besides, there was a need to elaborate on organizational principles and the structure of the organization.

Solving these problems in Ukraine in 1917 was a complicated process and lasted up to the end of 1919. It was at that time of uncoordinated communities and youth unions that first youth political unions appeared in Ukraine.

The process of formation of all-Ukrainian youth organizations lasted for a long period of time. It was conditioned by the activity of numerous political parties and trends in the republic that had different ultimate aims. For instance, the coalition of Ukrainian socialists (Ukrainian social democrats and the SRs) aspired to achieve wide autonomy for Ukraine as a part of the federal Russian state; the Party of People's Freedom (the Kadets) aimed at the creation of a new law-governed state by the example of Western democracies. The difference in the parties' aims resulted in a sharp differentiation among Ukraine's population. Instead of consolidation, there was a struggle between various groups of young people.

The process of youth union formation was complicated due to the socio-political instability and drastic regime changes, for example, the Provisional Government, the Ukrainian Central Rada, the Bolsheviks Government, hetman Skoropadskyi and German occupational troops, the Directorate.

Thus, the deepening of the economic crisis and socio-political instability restrained the development of the youth movement, prevented the youth from integration into all-Ukrainian unions. However, despite those problems, the consolidation of the young generation was a process that developed, deepened and went on in different directions.

One of directions in Ukraine's youth movement was formed under the influence of Ukrainian national parties. In spring 1917 they proclaimed requirements concerning the formation of autonomous Ukraine as a part of federal Russia [1, p. 219-224], creation of Ukrainian educational system (including higher education) [1, p. 112, 113], and Ukrainization of «all spheres of life» [1, p. 77]. All this had significant impact on the evolution of political processes in the Republic.

Dissemination of these theses among Ukrainian youth caused the appearance of numerous groups and unions that advanced the idea of national youth organization and education. This idea was most clearly formulated in the article called «From the «Students' Association's» Life». It said, «The main aim of this organization is self-education and protection of Ukrainian students' interests» [25, November 11]. With this purpose in mind, groups devoted to Ukrainian studies were created everywhere. In addition to that, lectures on historical and political topics were held.

Comparative analysis of the Ukrainian Central Rada's aims and those of «youth communities» makes it possible to draw a conclusion that they advanced similar ideas concerning mass organization and

education in the direction of national revival. This circumstance proves that there is an ideological connection between them. However, it is not limited by this fact only. In-depth study of youth organizations of that time reveals that they did not limit themselves to functioning in the youth environment. Members of youth communities were actively involved into Ukraine's political life. Appeal of the Katerynoslav youth community «To Ukrainian Citizens» is a typical example of youth organisations' members campaigning among the population. It said, «It is our duty to make sure that none of Ukrainian newspapers is wasted. Those that we do not need must be given to peasants. The Katerynoslav youth community took the initiative in this affair... As they (peasants) are even now unaware that they only learn most information by word of mouth; that only occasionally do peasants get a Russian paper which might deliberately conceal Ukrainian affairs or even treat them quite antagonistically» [23, June 11].

Transformation of these youth groups into organizations occurred spontaneously. National youth unions did not receive any significant help in developing their ideological principles on Ukrainian parties' part. This circumstance is explained by the fact that the leaders of these parties generally underestimated young people and reduced their role to bringing up the rising generation and «educating Ukrainian masses» [11, p. 23]. Thus, under the guise of «spiritual maturing of the youth» before their beginning active political life, the idea was defended that youth associations and communities should be non-partisan. This approach resulted in the fact that Ukrainian parties did not directly participate in youth unions' functioning, though actively contributed to their emergence.

Creation of youth organizations on the basis of strict compliance with the national principle in terms of multi-ethnic composition of Ukraine limited the social base of this youth movement sector. Representatives of other nationalities had their own views of what a new society should be like. They insisted on the creation of a state that would guarantee free development for every nation, not just one, even the titular one. So they began to unite into their own national communities. In 1917 a number of national Jewish associations appeared in Ukraine [2, p. 21]. The basis of their organizational structure, as well as in the Ukrainian youth associations, was the national principle. It had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, this principle was justified for it facilitated youth consolidation based on the national idea. On the other hand, it significantly restrained the possibilities of development for the youth movement because absolutisation of the national principle in the formation of a youth association narrowed its social base and caused an opposition between young people's interests of each nation. This contributed to the intense confrontation between different groups of young people and the emergence of separatism among the younger generation. It also led to a struggle between different unions for influence on the youth [2, p. 6].

Despite this drawback, youth national organizations were established in all major cities and other populated areas.

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