

**REVOLUTIONARY YEARS OF 1917–1920:  
THE REALIZATION OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL NATURE  
OF THE UKRAINIAN PEASANTRY**

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In the context of the revolutionary transformations, the aspirations, moral and ethical traits, and social values of the Ukrainian peasantry were mobilized and realized. The mass behavior of the peasantry in 1917–1920, the deep features of the economic and political culture of Ukrainian farmers and their ethno-cultural characteristics determined the general background and consequences of social processes, and determined the essence of the revolutionary transformations in Dnipro valley, Ukraine.

In the context of the revolutionary transformations of 1917–1920, the peasantry came to the conditions of the revolutionary changes with economic ideas formed over a long period of time in traditional society. The central place in them was occupied by the primordial ways of solving economic and material issues that had been passed down from generation to generation. In the conditions of 1917–1920, Ukrainian farmers saw the possibility of realizing their dream ideal of life based on their right to land, free disposal of it according to their own ideas and the results of their work, and solving the long-suffering problem of satisfying the food needs. The peasants saw the transfer of landowners' land to them as a direct way to achieve the socioeconomic ideal.

The idea of the illegitimacy of the existence of large land ownership by privileged classes and, at the same time, the right of peasants to landlords' land was formed in the historical past and has passed through centuries of peasant history. The existence

of small peasant-Cossack land tenure in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during the era of the Khmelnytsky and Hetmanate, developed a socially significant idea of land ownership and the results of economic activity on it. M. Hrushevsky pointed out that the peasantry at that time sought “guarantees of their personal and estate rights, the right to land, the right to labor and its results”<sup>1</sup>. With the change of generations of Ukrainian farmers, socio-economic aspirations were characterized by stability, as they reflected real ways to ensure material well-being, adequate to their cultural and technical capabilities, and most importantly, they could not but preserve in the social memory of the peasantry the fact that the noble landlords owned former peasant lands—that is, lands seized “illegally”, at one time taken away from the peasants. Therefore, in the first half of the nineteenth century, according to O. Kryzhanivska’s research, the peasantry had claims and encroached on landowners’ lands<sup>2</sup>. In the second half of the same nineteenth century, a similar situation was observed. M. Drahomanov noted the reliability of the historical memory of Ukrainian farmers. “Until recently, there were people in Ukraine,” the scholar wrote, “who remembered how free people living on lordly lands were registered as serfs, how lands with free people were distributed to lords. And then he pointed out that “all over Ukraine they remember that this was done by Tsarina Catherine”<sup>3</sup>.

On the eve of the revolutionary events of 1917–1920, the mass perception that landed property belonged to the peasantry was noted by the empire’s law enforcement agencies. Thus, as of 1912, according to the police, rumors about the transfer of landowners’

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<sup>1</sup> Грушевський М. Історія України-Руси. В 11-х кн., 12-ти тт. Т. VII. Київ : Наукова думка, 1995. С. 270.

<sup>2</sup> Крижанівська О. Соціальні настрої та уявлення селян Правобережної України у 20–50-х рр. XIX ст. *Український історичний журнал*. 2007. № 2. С. 130–142.

<sup>3</sup> Драгоманов М. Українські селяне в неспокоїні роки (1880–1882). *Громада. Українська збірка*. 1882. № 5. С. 247–248.

estates to peasants were actively spreading on the Right Bank of Ukraine. At the same time, the lack of confirmation of such expectations caused farmers to become angry with the authorities. "...in their opinion", one official document stated, "they alone have the right to receive income from the land. As such ideals of the peasantry are not realized and do not find the desired support in the State Duma, a casual but fully expressive feeling of anger grows against all those who ... prevent the realization of their long-held dream<sup>4</sup>".

Historically formed claims to landlord property were reinforced by the traditional way of life. The dominance of the patriarchal way of life, as stated in the scientific literature<sup>5</sup>, dictated the nature of economic activity aimed at providing food with the help of traditional means of labor. In such circumstances, the solution to material problems in the peasants' perceptions depended not on the level of agricultural machinery, methods of soil cultivation, plant and animal breeding, but primarily on the amount of physical effort and land at their disposal. Such perceptions, in turn, formed a high social value of physical labor in the peasant environment, and thus claims to land, since it is muscle effort, according to farmers, that only causes the appearance of food. Therefore, only those who directly cultivate the land have the right to it. The peasantry also used this logic to explain the absence of moral and other grounds for the existence of landlords' right to land ownership, since it is not them, the landlords, who cultivate the land and put physical labor into it.

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<sup>4</sup> Центральний державний історичний архів України у місті Києві (далі – ЦДАК). Ф. 442. Оп. 861. Од. зб. 259. Ч. 1. Арк. 12, 22 та ін.

<sup>5</sup> Михайлюк О. Селянство України в перші десятиліття XX ст.: соціокультурні процеси. Дніпропетровськ : Інновація, 2007. 456 с.; Присяжнюк Ю. Українське селянство Наддніпрянської України: соціоментальна історія другої половини XIX – початку XX ст. Черкаси : Вертикаль, 2007. 640 с.

By the point of view of S. Kornovenko and O. Gerasimenko, at the beginning of the twentieth century, as a result of the process of its “self-identification”, that is, by the version of deep self-knowledge, the peasant mass formed a spiritual and cultural quality, which led to the emergence of a new type of peasant – the “peasant-ideomaniac”. The latter is interpreted as “excited by ideas” – focused on the problems of his livelihood and their solution by “returning” the landlord’s property. Such an emotional and psychological state of the peasant stratum led to readiness for radical actions and revolutionary behavior<sup>6</sup>.

Anyway, in the conditions of the revolution, there were opportunities to realize the aspirations determined by the mass social culture of the peasantry. At the All-Ukrainian Peasant Congress, which took place on May 28 – June 2, 1917, Ukrainian farmers openly announced their socio-economic goals. The Peasants’ Congress opposed the existence of private ownership of land, demanded the liquidation of landlord land ownership and the transfer of all land areas to peasants to meet their consumer needs based on personal cultivation of the land. The congress declared that the land resources of the country “without redemption” will become “the property of the whole people”, and the land “should be used ... only by those who will cultivate it with their own hands” – that is, only the peasants. The participants of the congress, based on the logic generally accepted by the peasants, decided that the land area per household “must be no less than for consumption and no more for labor”<sup>7</sup>. The peasants-deputies of the All-Ukrainian Peasants’ Forum regarded their vision of solving the land issue as unconditional. Although they agreed that the final decision should be made

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<sup>6</sup> Корновенко С., Герасименко О. Селянин-бунтар. Селянська революція в Україні 1902–1917 рр. Черкаси : Чабаненко Ю. А., 2017. С. 4–7, 32–38, 62, 141–144 та ін.

<sup>7</sup> Хміль І. Перший Всеукраїнський селянський з’їзд (28 травня – 2 червня 1917 р.). Київ : Поліграф. д-ця Ін-ту історії України НАН України, 1992. С. 23–24.

by the Constituent Assembly, they pointed out the necessity of implementing their approach to agrarian problems. In this regard, the resolutions of the congress stated: “The All-Russian Constituent Assembly must approve all this”<sup>8</sup>. That is, the peasantry declared that it would be able to put up with only those decisions of the authorities that correspond to its expectations.

Further revolutionary events confirmed the consistency of the peasantry in this position. Ukrainian farmers demonstrated the ability not only to resolve the land issue by means of peaceful political struggle, political and legal methods, but also by force during 1917–1920. Not recognizing the right of private property for landlords and wealthy peasants, the peasantry aggressively claimed land themselves. The peasantry did not distinguish between such phenomena as ownership, possession, and use<sup>9</sup>. They saw land in the appropriate amount as an indispensable part of a peasant household for farming and feeding. For the peasantry, the land issue was a matter of legal morality and the culture of economic and material life developed in their environment – the right to the usual way of activity aimed at subsistence. At the same time, the legal and economic culture cultivated by the state and urban civilization was not perceived by the peasantry and did not become a guide.

All segments of the peasantry were in favor of taking away landed property and transferring it to the peasants. This fact has been noted by a number of authoritative historians, both past and present. A participant in the revolutionary events of the first decades of the twentieth century, historian A. Shestakov noted that not only small-landed and poor peasants were in favor of redistribution of landowners’ property, but also wealthy farmers. “...in many cases”,

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<sup>8</sup> Хміль І. Перший Всеукраїнський селянський з’їзд (28 травня – 2 червня 1917 р.). Київ : Поліграф. д-ця Ін-ту історії України НАН України, 1992. С. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Коріненко П., Баран Б. Правові засади земельних відносин в українському селі в першій половині ХХ ст. Історичний аспект. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2021. С. 68.

he noted, “the initiators of the movement were not the poor, but middle and wealthy peasants – up to the kulaks, ... interested in expanding land at the expense of the landlord”<sup>10</sup>. The well-known Soviet historian M. Pokrovsky generally believed that the idea of transferring landowners’ estates to the peasantry and independent management of the land was a characteristic feature of the consciousness of all strata of the peasantry of the East Slavic peoples for several centuries: “...the aspiration of the peasant to become a small independent producer...” – ‘This is the core of the entire Russian agrarian history, starting... from the sixteenth century, if not earlier,’ he noted<sup>11</sup>.

Modern Ukrainian historians O. Mykhailiuk and P. Korinenko ascertain the common peasant nature of the aspiration to “self-grabbing of lands”. They note that wealthy peasants were more active in seizing landlord property<sup>12</sup>. However, as P. Korinenko points out, representatives of different strata could have specific approaches to the problem of distribution of land areas taken from landowners. The poor peasantry believed that it was fair to divide the landlord’s land according to the number of eaters, and wealthy owners demanded a division according to the number of working cattle in the household<sup>13</sup>. But in the vortex of bloody social struggle, the last position quickly lost its effectiveness.

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<sup>10</sup> Шестаков А. Крестьянская революция 1905–1907 гг. Москва ; Ленинград : Госиздат, 1926. С. 16, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Покровский М. Очерки русского революционного движения XIX–XX вв. Лекции, читанные на курсах секретарей уездных комитетов РКП(б) зимой 1923–1924 гг. Москва : Красная новь, 1924. С. 8–9.

<sup>12</sup> Михайлюк О. Селянство України в перші десятиліття XX ст.: соціокультурні процеси. Дніпропетровськ: Інновація, 2007. С. 325; Коріненко П. Земельне питання в історичній долі українського селянства. Погляд крізь віки. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2022. С. 82–83.

<sup>13</sup> Коріненко П., Баран Б. Правові засади земельних відносин в українському селі в першій половині XX ст. Історичний аспект. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2021. С. 64.

Ukrainian farmers dreamed of realizing their economic aspirations based on the decisions of the state authorities. However, the dreams were not fulfilled, and the “agrarian passion”, as noted in 1906 by a contemporary of the events regarding the state of the peasantry, only progressed<sup>14</sup>. According to police documents, the peasantry had a “completely distinct feeling of embitterment<sup>15</sup>”, which was realized in the conditions of 1917–1920.

Obviously, it is no accident that historians characterize the socio-psychological state of Ukrainian farmers during the revolution and the behavior caused by it with the concepts of “social banditry”<sup>16</sup>, “militarization of consciousness”<sup>17</sup>, “peasant-ideomaniac”<sup>18</sup>, which in general appear to be the driving mechanism of the mass aggressive struggle of the peasants for the realization of their vision socio-economic justice and achievement of the ideal of economic life.

The specified psychological and emotional state, which was not only a product of the revolutionary era, but also a long-term cultural and ethical progress of the peasantry, and reflected in the above concepts proposed by historians, determined the social self-sufficiency of the peasantry in revolutionary transformations in the field of agrarian relations, led to a completely independent process of sequestration of landlord land by the peasantry and its redistribution in accordance with the desired order. In 1922, the Central Statistical Office of the USSR conducted a special survey to find out the circumstances of the liquidation of landlord land ownership. It covered the inhabitants of more than 3,000 settlements and more than a million peasant households – 24.4% of their number.

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<sup>14</sup> Херсонєц. Аграрные очерки. *Украинский вестник*. 1906. № 14. С. 942.

<sup>15</sup> ЦДІАК. Ф. 442. Оп. 861. Од. зб. 259. Частина 1. Арк. 12, 22 та ін.

<sup>16</sup> Михайлюк О. Селянство України в перші десятиліття ХХ ст.: соціокультурні процеси. Дніпропетровськ : Інновація, 2007. С. 342 та ін.

<sup>17</sup> Коріненко П. Земельне питання в історичній долі українського селянства. Погляд крізь віки. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2022. С. 82–83.

<sup>18</sup> Корновенко С., Герасименко О. Селянин-бунтар. Селянська революція в Україні 1902–1917 рр. Черкаси : Чабаненко Ю. А., 2017. С. 4–7, 32–38, 62, 141–144 та ін.

The results of the survey showed that agrarian transformations in the period 1917–1920 were carried out by the peasantry in general in a “purely ... spontaneous situation” – i.e., spontaneously, without control by the state authorities or an external regime in relation to the countryside. In 27% of cases – “through individual or group passions”. 62% – “with the help of land committees”. But the latter – the land committees – according to the materials of the survey: “they could not change the exciting order, but only directed it in a calmer direction”. As a result, the land committees only authorized the arbitrary seizure of landowners’ estates by Ukrainian farmers<sup>19</sup>. The economic culture of the peasantry turned out to be a sufficient value-ideological and ethical resource for the implementation of agrarian transformations of a revolutionary nature.

However, the redistribution of landowners’ property did not bring radical relief. The economic culture of Ukrainian farmers had the peculiarity that it did not rely too much on scientific knowledge, but also on basic awareness of agriculture. On the eve of 1917, the majority of land was already owned by the peasantry – 57%. Landlords owned much less – only 43% of the land<sup>20</sup>.

In such a situation, there was land to distribute among peasant farms, but the amount of land was not sufficient to enrich farmers in a fundamental way. As a result of the revolutionary transformations, the area of peasant land use increased by 13,193,330 deses, which were added to the 19,395,602 deses owned by peasants since pre-revolutionary times<sup>21</sup>. Thus, the volume of peasant land increased significantly – more than one and a half times – at the expense of landlords. However, apparently, in practice, having realized that the former landlord’s property was not enough,

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<sup>19</sup> Якиманский В. К итогам аграрной революции на Украине по данным анкетного обследования 1922 года. Харьков : Типо-литогр. В-РС УВО им. Фрунзе [1924]. С. 1–3, 25–27.

<sup>20</sup> Підсумки аграрної революції на Україні. Харків : б. в., 1923. С. 2 та ін.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. С. 2.

or because they felt capable of acquiring even more land, peasants rushed to divide the land among themselves. According to some estimates, approximately 4.5 million hectares were redistributed within peasant land use. About 10% of the peasant owners lost almost half of their land allotments in the revolutionary transformations. As a result, the revolutionized part of the peasantry, involved in the radical redistribution of property, acquired a total of 19.8 million hectares, about 45.5% of Ukraine's land area<sup>22</sup>, and thus almost doubled its land supply. This was the result of many years of bloody struggle, which obviously does not seem to be an adequate price for sacrificial participation in the revolutionary bloody cataclysm. The mass economic culture of the peasantry of those times clearly did not exclude cruelty, social vengeance, and recklessness in solving material problems.

However, not only primitive and archaic ideas and values determined the behavior of the Ukrainian peasantry. On the eve of the revolution, specialists in the field of agrarian issues noted the emergence of a new type of peasant-owner in a cultural sense, who showed complete commitment to modernization, the use of the latest technology, the selection of plants and animals, and the advanced organization of work<sup>23</sup>. This layer was not progressive, but it was known even in the 1920s<sup>24</sup>, that is, it did not disappear in the vortex of armed struggle of the revolutionary era. However, the most visible manifestation of the latest modernization trends in the countryside were cooperative forms of management. Cooperation in Trans-Dnieper Ukraine during the revolution had a mass character, during 1917–1920. the number of members

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<sup>22</sup> Белонін М., Гаража М. Характеристика землевпорядження на Україні. *Український землевпорядник*. 1928. № 7. С. 11.

<sup>23</sup> До нових хліборобів. *Хлібороб*. 1911. № 7. С. 383–385; Гладченко А. Отчего так малы крестьянские урожаи? *Южное хозяйство*. 1914. № 7. С. 249.

<sup>24</sup> Чубар В. Я. Шляхом усупільнення до збільшення врожайности. Відповідь тов. В. Я. Чубаря на селянські листи. *Радянський селянин*. 1928. № 1. С. 5.

of cooperative societies approached 7 million. Participants<sup>25</sup>, served up to 20 mln people<sup>26</sup>. According to various calculations, it provided at least 28% or 32% of the turnover, and according to some data, the share in the turnover even reached 40% or 46%<sup>27</sup>. In terms of its social composition, the cooperative generally had a peasant character. 88.7% of the most massive type of consumer cooperatives, which accounted for 74% of the total number of cooperatives, united rural residents<sup>28</sup>.

Cooperative farming was a form of adaptation to modernization, commodity production, and the market economy. Participation in the process of economic activity on a cooperative basis fostered a commitment to innovation, a desire for commodity production, personal responsibility for one's actions, and at the same time the ability to work in a team. Cooperation during the revolution was a continuation of the cooperative progress of pre-revolutionary times. In the context of the revolutionary upheavals, peasant cooperation not only withstood the brutal tests of bloodshed, destruction of its infrastructure, transportation, and the destructive policies of various regimes, but also became a way of economic salvation. The socio-cultural features formed by cooperative activity have already become sustainable and were implemented in the everyday practice of economic life. This ensured the further post-revolutionary progress of the peasantry towards economic modernization and cultural emancipation.

The economic culture of the peasant stratum, shaped by the specifics of historical development, was based on mass

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<sup>25</sup> Центральний державний архів вищих органів влади та управління України (далі – ЦДАВО). Ф. 206. Оп. 1. Спр. 195. Арк. 6.

<sup>26</sup> Мохор П. Од Баліна до Леніна. Етапи розвитку кооперативної думки на Україні. Київ : Книгоспілка, 1924. С. 64.

<sup>27</sup> Фомицкий В. Кооперация в условиях НЭПа. *Українська кооперація*. 1923. № 1–2. С. 51.

<sup>27</sup> ЦДАВО. Ф. 206. Оп. 1. Спр. 195. Арк. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

perceptions of social justice. These ideas were of a general peasant nature and did not depend on the property level of the peasants. They viewed the large landed property of noble landlords, as well as wealthy peasants, as an immoral phenomenon caused by the confiscation of land from the peasantry in the past and the lack of participation of large owners in labor. According to the peasantry, only labor on the land and the need to meet food needs gave them the right to land. The way the peasantry distributed landed property was determined by the logic of subsistence farming and food. The share of the landowner's property that could be claimed depended on the number of household members.

The economic culture of the peasantry became a value guide in the revolutionary struggle, justifying the elimination of landownership and leading to mass actions aimed at socio-economic transformation, sometimes violent and brutal, in accordance with the economic ideals of the peasantry.

The economic perceptions of the peasantry are a product of traditional culture. In the context of modernization trends and the revolution, farmers implemented transformation scenarios available to them that would allow them to adapt and provide themselves with food in the new conditions of socio-economic life based on commodity-money relations, using means they understood – expanding the area of land use. The economic culture of the peasantry was generally not associated with aspirations for modernization, but only with its physical preservation.

During the revolution, the traditional economic culture of the peasantry, acquired over the centuries, dominated and was implemented. However, in the tumultuous and bloody process of realizing the most cherished dreams of material and economic well-being, innovative segments of the economic outlook were preserved, which organically continued their progress and affected the modernization of socio-economic life in the post-revolutionary era.

A characteristic feature of the political behavior of the peasantry during the revolutionary struggle was the mobilization of the traditions of the Cossack times. The connection between the peasant uprising and the Cossacks was quite visible to contemporaries of the revolutionary events of 1917–1920. A participant in a congress of representatives of peasant armed groups operating in the area of Cherkasy in the Kyiv region in 1919 noted their incredible similarity to Cossack groups. According to him, the peasant assembly “resembled Zaporizhzhia and the council of the Cossacks of the Sich, it had something medieval about its weapons, people, clothes, and the whole situation; it seemed to be a gathering of freemen discussing a plan for their raids”<sup>29</sup>.

B. Kozelsky, a high-ranking official of the political surveillance authorities of the Ukrainian SSR, quite frankly explained the reasons for the successful resistance of the Kholodnyi Yar peasant rebels to Soviet rule in a book published in the 1920s by explaining the history of the region. “Because of its ... peculiar romance,” Kozelsky noted, ‘woven from the remnants of the Middle Ages, Kholodnyi Yar was an impregnable fortress for the Soviet government,’ because ‘every piece of land, every village and hamlet is a monument to the Haidamachchyna,’ he argued<sup>30</sup>.

After the contemporaries of the revolutionary events, historians clearly pointed to the realization of a certain behavioral tradition connected with the historical past in the context of revolutionary events. For example, the famous historian M. Pokrovsky drew attention to the “coincidence of the 1905 peasant revolution and the Makhnovist revolution in the same places”. “...those counties of the Yekaterinoslav, Kharkiv, and Poltava provinces that were the theater of the Makhnovist movement are the counties of the most

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<sup>29</sup> Дикий А. Из истории партизанской борьбы на Черкашине (Воспоминания о 1919 году). *Летопись революции*. 1927. № 2 (23). С. 98–99, 101.

<sup>30</sup> Козельський Б. Шлях зрадництва й авантюри (петлюрівське повстанство). Харків : Державне видавництво України, 1927. С. 75.

vivid movement of 1905... The most vivid movement of 1905 and the Makhnovist movement took place on the same territory..." he noted<sup>31</sup>. Modern researchers of the "peasant republics" of the revolutionary period also note that "the same villages were at the forefront of peasant revolutionariness in 1917–1921 as in 1902–1907"<sup>32</sup>. Contemporary historian D. Archireiskyi explains the same "Makhnovism" by even deeper origins than the events of the first years of the twentieth century. He points out that the settlements covered by N. Makhno's power in the historical past "were not lordly, and their inhabitants remembered their Cossack lineage even in the early twentieth century"<sup>33</sup>.

According to contemporary scholarly literature, the Cossack origin of the peasant uprising also manifested the symbolic and ritual functions of weapons. Its character determined the status of a peasant rebel. Weapons were used in the ritual of burying the dead. Among the rebels, death with arms was considered a worthy death. Weapons were exchanged as a sign of fraternization<sup>34</sup>.

In the dissertation of V. Lozovyi, the connection between the revolutionary struggle of the peasantry and the historically formed culture and social practice is revealed in detail. The researcher states that "For the peasant consciousness, the "Cossack ideal" had a special attraction". This "ideal" determined the socio-political behavior

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<sup>31</sup> Покровский М. Виступ без назви в обговоренні доповіді С. М. Дубровського «Крестьянство в революции 1905 г.» 20 листопада 1925 р. *Историк-марксист*. 1926. Т. I. С. 269.

<sup>32</sup> Корновенко С., Берестовий А., Компанієць О., Пасічна Ю., П'янзін С., Щербаков М. Селянське республікотворення періоду Української революції 1917–1921 рр. Черкаси : Чабаненко Ю. А., 2019. С. 165.

<sup>33</sup> Архірейський Д. Аграрні передумови махновського руху (до проблеми земельних відносин та диференціації селянства Південної України у переддень революції 1917 р.). *Питання аграрної історії України та Росії: матеріали десятих наукових читань, присвячених пам'яті Д. П. Пойди* : зб. наук. пр. Дніпропетровськ : Вид-во ПФ «Стандарт-Сервіс», 2014. С. 69.

<sup>34</sup> Зозуля Н. Повстанський рух на Середньому Подніпров'ї (1918–1922 рр.) за спогадами старшин армії УНР : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Черкаси, 2018. С. 11, 16.

of the peasants, which ignored the norms established by the state authorities. Therefore, along with the official institutions of power, “Councils of Peasant Deputies and Village Unions” emerged, which “were supposed to become the main bodies of the organized peasantry regarding the formation and control ... of all power structures and institutions”. In the practice of solving problems of social relations, Ukrainian farmers used “not state legal acts, but norms of customary law”. According to V. Lozovoy, “village and parish committees under the control of the peasants adopted illegal resolutions, carried out arrests, carried out arbitrary actions (which seemed fair to them from the point of view of peasant morality), removed judges and administered justice themselves” and “were aimed at the embodiment of ... peasant interests, not the interests of the state and society”. For farmers, the “resolutions of peasant congresses” were the highest norm in the regulation of social relations, “the peasant level of legal awareness gave these resolutions the status of local laws”, noted V. Lozovyi<sup>35</sup>.

P. Korinenko and B. Baran came to similar conclusions regarding the political and legal culture of the peasantry during the revolution. They noted the disregard of existing legislative norms by Ukrainian farmers, even in the conditions of the arrangement of revolutionary authorities. The researchers noted the “increase in illegal actions” by villagers, drew attention to “the clear criminal character of illegal actions by the villagers”. In the revolutionary conditions, the traditional self-governing institutions – the community, the peasant estate, and even rallies – became legitimate authorities for the peasantry<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Лозовий В. Ставлення селянства України до влади в добу Центральної Ради (березень 1917 р. – квітень 1918 р.) : автореф. дис. ... докт. іст. наук. Київ, 2010. С. 18–19, 26 та ін.

<sup>36</sup> Коріненко П., Баран Б. Правові засади земельних відносин в українському селі в першій половині ХХ ст. Історичний аспект. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2021. С. 63, 65, 68–69, 117.

Obviously, this behavior of disregarding the norms and rules of life imposed by other socio-political forces and the implementation of one's own rules was determined by motives of justice, as well as the ability to carry out one's own program of transformations developed by tradition and creativity of the revolutionary era and the organization of its implementation. True, the embodiment of justice was proposed by the peasantry in a narrowly social way, combined with ignoring the interests of other classes, and even with their physical removal from the arena of public life.

The active striving for social justice, combined with the radical nature of its implementation, gave birth to massive malicious intentions and values towards others, which were also applied to representatives of their own peasant environment. According to the results of the research of the revolutionary era, P. Korinenko noted that the peasants “without particularly thinking, embarked on the path of armed struggle, committed violence against others (often the same peasants) and took pleasure in it”. According to P. Korinenko, the moral face of the peasantry tended to reach such a level that “the peasants lost their sense of dignity, compassion for their neighbor, especially if he had more property”. To denote this social phenomenon of the peasant environment, the scientist proposed the concepts of “politicization of consciousness”<sup>37</sup> and “militarization of consciousness”. The bearers of this consciousness were obviously well depicted by a contemporary in the early 1920s: “...a backward, thuggish, but poor population”<sup>38</sup>.

The “militarization of consciousness” no longer predicted and did not condition life at the expense of agricultural work, but provoked the solution of all problems by seizing the property of others<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Коріненко П. Земельне питання в історичній долі українського селянства. Погляд крізь віки. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2022. С. 82–83.

<sup>38</sup> Доповіді в Губвиконкомі про життя села. *Сільрада*. 1925. № 2. С. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Коріненко П. Земельне питання в історичній долі українського селянства. Погляд крізь віки. Тернопіль : ТНПУ ім. В. Гнатюка, 2022. С. 82–83.

It is not by chance that a certain part of the peasant insurgent units, according to the researcher of the peasant movement during the revolution Y. Kotlyar, turned “into bandit formations”<sup>40</sup>.

O. Mykhailiuk called social activity and, at the same time, moral decay of the peasantry in the context of the revolutionary struggle with their socio-cultural and political consequences “social banditry”. The latter, according to the scholar, is “a living unity of polar characteristics”<sup>41</sup>. In other words, “social banditry” is a phenomenon that manifests both the struggle for genuine social justice and the objective inability of a certain part of the peasantry to remain within the limits of moral norms and not succumb to purely criminal behavior or immoral behavior. The process of upholding social justice is not always able to develop, disseminate and establish a new morality in time, to protect and multiply the expedient rules of life tested by previous history. Some participants in revolutionary transformations, in the face of the rejection of the old order and its norms, resort to borrowing the already existing ethics of malice developed in the criminal environment, which, like revolutionary morality, calls for acting contrary to the existing legal order.

O. Mykhailiuk noted that the generally accepted meaning of the concept of “social banditry” implies a reflection of the pre-political worldview and behavior, the traditional culture of the peasantry. However, in the context of the revolution, the phenomenon of “social banditry” also acquired a political character, “politicization,” as the researcher writes. At the same time, the “politicization” of peasant behavior did not stop,

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<sup>40</sup> Котляр Ю. Повстансько-партизанський рух українських селян у 1919 – на початку 1920 рр. (На матеріалах Півдня України) : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Одеса, 1997. С. 11–12.

<sup>41</sup> Михайлюк О. Селянство України в перші десятиліття ХХ ст.: соціокультурні процеси. Дніпропетровськ : Інновація, 2007. С. 342 та ін.

as O. Mykhailiuk points out, its “criminalization” caused by the influence of urban civilization and the decay of the traditional way of life in the village<sup>42</sup>.

The concepts of “politicization of consciousness,” “militarization of consciousness,” and “social banditry” obviously reflect a phenomenon that was not an achievement of the revolutionary times of the early twentieth century, the period of 1917–1920. It manifested itself throughout the centuries of history, and was realized in the form of peasant uprisings and Cossack wars, the movement of opryshkos and haidamaks, and the Koliyivshchyna. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a set of acute social problems that triggered the revolutionary process once again revived the centuries-old ideological tool of adaptation to revolutionary conditions – “militarization of consciousness” and “social banditry” – that is, the willingness to radically satisfy one’s interests by force, muscle effort, and armed force, to ignore danger and deprive opponents and enemies of property, power, and life, and to impose social norms and moral values favorable to oneself.

There are reasons to talk about the ideological and organizational armament of the peasantry in the conditions of the revolutionary struggle of 1917–1920. A conscious resource in the form of an appropriate economic culture, mass socio-economic aspirations and moral-psychological readiness for social transformations, which received, in particular, a formalization in modern concepts “ideomaniacs”, “militarization of consciousness” and “social banditry” and the effectiveness of peasant communities create a convincing picture of the self-sufficiency of the Ukrainian peasantry in the revolutionary struggle. At the same time, despite the ideological and organizational armament of the peasantry in the conditions of the revolution, the peasantry did not show the ability or noticeable attempts to independently form a national

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<sup>42</sup> Михайлюк О. Селянство України в перші десятиліття XX ст.: соціокультурні процеси. Дніпропетровськ : Інновація, 2007. С. 342 та ін.

government or at least a state formation within the limits of a respectable territorial scale. Perhaps this is due to the lack of an effective political party that would enjoy the trust and active support of the peasantry. In a purely amateur mode, the revolutionized agriculturists managed to achieve only the activation of the activities of rural communities and the formation of the so-called “peasant republics”. In Dnieper Ukraine, during the time of the revolution, the last ones count up to two dozen. The reasons for the creation of these “republics” with a territorial extent, as a rule, from one or several villages to entire volosts and counties, are called by researchers “self-preservation, localization ... to survive ... in ... too changing socio-political circumstances ... and biologically”, protection from various regimes. It is not by chance that certain such “republics” are characterized by their “anti-Bolshevik trend” or “anti-Denikin”<sup>43</sup>. There was also a “peasant republic”, which modern historians call “robbery”, and another – “banal gangster”<sup>44</sup>. That is, these “republics” became a real embodiment of the negative version of the mentioned “social banditry”. Both the “republics” that were built on the idea of resistance to hostile political orders, and the “republics” overflowing with criminal aspirations grew out of the traditional communal foundations of the life of Ukrainian farmers, and became a reaction of the peasant system to the complexity of the socio-political situation.

At the same time, a significant part of the “peasant republics” maintained a clear course in support of certain forms of statehood – the Ukrainian People’s Republic or the Soviet state<sup>45</sup>. They should be considered as centers of these state formations, and not only as a form

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<sup>43</sup> Корновенко С., Берестовий А., Компанієць О., Пасічна Ю., П’янін С., Щербаков М. Селянське республікотворення періоду Української революції 1917–1921 рр. Черкаси : Чабаненко Ю. А., 2019. С. 106–109, 111, 116–117, 128, 135, 143 та ін.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. С. 122, 129.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. С. 121, 123, 125, 133, 141 та ін.

of self-defense of the peasantry in conditions of armed confrontation. In their cultural basis, both the traditional community principles of life and the latest, as at that time, trends of public and political life were combined, in these “republics” the true political consciousness and political self-organization of the peasantry manifested itself. Obviously, what has been said will also be true for Nestor Makhn’s “Gulyajpil Republic”.

However, the territory covered by the “peasant republics”, and thus the extent of the peasant society, the capabilities of which they demonstrated, was insignificant<sup>46</sup>. The bulk of the peasantry remained within the limits of self-organization in communities and the distribution of landlord property and was a participant, an active subject only of the economic revolution in the countryside, and not of the political revolution on a national scale.

The attitude of the majority of representatives of the peasantry to the revolutionary process under the conditions of a limited resource of political ideas had a specific and expedient-rational character. Among the political forces that were capable of organizing state power on a large territory, the peasantry tried to choose and support their optimal option and set demands for such support. The latter may appear as a lack of stable, consistent political positions and a limited social ability to organize state power. However, in this way, Ukrainian farmers defended their social interest in the specific conditions of their capabilities and political reality. The researcher of the Ukrainian peasantry, P. Korinenko, rightly pointed out that the peasant insurgent formations “struggled against all the authorities that limited their rights”<sup>47</sup>. It was through this that the peasantry manifested itself as a self-sufficient revolutionary force, forced

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<sup>46</sup> Корновенко С., Берестовий А., Компанієць О., Пасічна Ю., П’язнін С., Щербаков М. Селянське республікотворення періоду Української революції 1917–1921 рр. Черкаси : Чабаненко Ю. А., 2019. С. 194.

<sup>47</sup> Коріненко П. Історія українського селянства. Тернопіль : Вид. відділ ТНПУ, 2014. С. 101.

it to reckon with its interests, and, constituting the bulk of the population, made the existing power regimes dependent on it.

The general dynamics of political and ideological sympathies of ordinary Ukrainian farmers was studied in detail by V. Masnenko. According to him, "...the peasants as a military and political force were characterized by very changeable moods. They, as a rule, first welcomed every new government that promised to resolve the land issue in accordance with their interests, later became disappointed with it, and finally rebelled against it." Regarding the part of the peasantry that was ready for armed struggle, V. Masnenko noted that "the military actions of the armed peasantry were mainly defensive in nature (on the principle of 'defending their own farm'). The localization of peasant thinking and the isolation of the "peasant world" were evident<sup>48</sup>. With such "thinking", peasants did not accept their involvement in the armed formations of various state and political entities. A. Lysenko, studying the reasons for desertion, argues that "the majority of Ukrainian soldiers did not want to sacrifice their lives for other people's ideals, preferring to defend their own homes or settlements"<sup>49</sup>.

The "localization of thinking" of the peasants could be characterized by a lack of understanding of general political events and, at the same time, a completely adequate statement about the uncertainty of the political situation and the cataclysm of socio-political life. Here are the memoirs of a contemporary of the revolutionary events, a rural resident of the Chyhyryn region. She claimed that in 1917 "Tsar Nikola was overthrown" and "anarchy" began, which lasted until the mid-1920s. Probably,

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<sup>48</sup> Масненко В. Як українські селяни стали воїнами (до соціокультурних і мілітарних аспектів революції 1917–1921 рр.). *Український селянин*. 2018. Вип. 18. С. 57.

<sup>49</sup> Лисенко А. Деякі суспільно-політичні причини дезертирства в роки громадянської війни на Україні (1918–1919 рр.). *Україна Соборна*. 2006. Вип. 4. Том 1. С. 150–151.

a significant part of Ukrainian farmers perceived political reality in this way and avoided any participation in political life.

The political outlook and behavior of the Ukrainian peasantry during the revolutionary struggle of 1917–1920 showed different, at first glance, even opposite trends. In their struggle and everyday life, Ukrainian farmers realized centuries-old, apparently not fully realized traditions of social behavior, their ideas and aspirations. During the revolution, the achievements of social culture accumulated by the history of the Ukrainian peasantry were mobilized, and they were quite obvious, their manifestations did not require a deep immersion in the content of the events to see the Cossack face of the peasant revolution.

High socio-political activity was characterized by Ukrainian farmers and their consistency in defending and armed struggle for their interests. Disregard for law and order and morality that did not agree with the position of the peasantry, readiness for radical actions, and physical destruction of opponents were characteristic features of the political ethics of the peasantry. The high level of organization within rural communities and even their agglomerations and the recognition of the status of the highest authority by the peasant self-government bodies are also integral characteristics of the political perceptions and capacities of peasants and their right-wing culture.

The above was combined with low political awareness, localized perception of public life, and unwillingness to participate in general political processes at the national level.

On the eve of the revolutionary events, the ethnographic mass of the peasantry underwent a process of ethnic self-identification and the formation of a sense of national belonging and consciousness. The reasons for this were the economic trends of peasant farming, the educational and ideological work of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, and the large-scale political events of the twentieth century.

In the early twentieth century, contemporaries noted manifestations of national identity among peasant farmers who were economically and politically independent. In 1914, the journal “Ukrainian Life” (“Ukraine Life”) spoke of conscious Ukrainians “from the spheres of the wealthy peasantry” who “form a class of economically strong and politically independent farmers” – that is, capable of defending their social and national interests at both the economic and political levels<sup>50</sup>. According to the same magazine, such farmers-owners “do not break their ties with either the Ukrainian nationality or the Ukrainian language” and “as expected, Ukrainian capital is growing in the person of the middle peasantry, which preserves the national features and national language of the indigenous population of Ukraine”<sup>51</sup>.

It was not only about the preservation of host peasants as bearers of a certain ethnic culture, but also their acquisition of a very specific idea of their ethnic belonging and the ability to realize their interests as representatives of the ethnic group. Behind this was the problem of small land and the ownership of land areas by representatives of another culture – russians and Poles, as well as the dominance of the commodity services market by speculators – the same Russians, Poles and Jews who first bought cheaply and then resold the products of peasant farms. The famous Ukrainian historian. On this occasion, M. Yavorskyi wrote with specific categories of his vocabulary: “...the hated Russian commercial capital and its homegrown, but worn-out, this is the main enemy of the Ukrainian bourgeois entity”<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Правобережец В. Политика польских руководящих сфер по отношению к Украине. *Украинская жизнь*. 1914. № 12. С. 35.

<sup>51</sup> Гордиенко М. Капитализм и русская культура на Украине. *Украинская жизнь*. 1912. № 9. С. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Яворський М. Проблема української націонал-демократичної революції у 1917 р., її історичні основи та її рухові сили. *Червоний шлях*. 1927. № 2. С. 123.

The peasant owner, called a “bourgeois entity”, felt his cultural otherness as a result of sharp socio-economic contradictions with the foreign environment. Obviously, for some, this otherness remained a manifestation of traditional culture, recognition of someone else’s ideas and behavior established in the peasant society. However, for a certain part of the farmers, the relationship with the non-ethnic element determined the search for their national identity. A well-known participant in the events of the revolution. On this occasion, D. Lebyd noted that the protection of social and economic interests began to be combined by the peasantry with the solution of the national question. “Kurkul of the Ukrainian village ... felt it”, noted D. Lebid – that the national issue can become for him the force with which he, it may happen, will be able to preserve his kulak well-being”<sup>53</sup>.

The Ukrainian intelligentsia devoted itself to the formation of national consciousness among the peasant masses. The effectiveness of its activities in this area was recognized by the bodies of political supervision. According to the data of the Kyiv security department in 1913, “the Little Russian intelligentsia ... made great progress in the sense of propagating a false doctrine about the origin of Ukraine, ... as well as ideas about the possibilities ... of an “independent Ukraine”<sup>54</sup>.

The events of the First World War accelerated the process of ethnic self-identification and self-awareness. The inevitability of constant contact in army units with representatives of different ethnic groups objectively forced farmers mobilized into the army to think about their own identity. About 2.8 million people were conscripted from the rural settlements of Dnipro river valley

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<sup>53</sup> Лебедь Д. Крестьянство в революции. *Октябрьская революция: первое пятилетие*. Харьков: Государственное издательство Украины, 1922. С. 78.

<sup>54</sup> ЦДАК. Ф. 442. Оп. 861. Од. зб. 259. Частина 1. Арк. 44 зв.

in Ukraine<sup>55</sup> and they made up the majority of the 3.5 million or, according to other data, 4.5 million, mobilized from the territory of the province, which covered Ukrainian ethnographic territories<sup>56</sup>. As a result, public associations of Ukrainians began to emerge in the armed forces of the empire. In the fall of 1917, there were 1,337 such organizations<sup>57</sup>.

As for to the assessment of a well-known contemporary of the era of the revolution D. Lebed, “by the time of the October Revolution, the peasantry of Ukraine half fell under nationalist influence”<sup>58</sup> – that is, it identified itself by nationality and had political behavior determined by this characteristic. It is not surprising that the revolutionary events of 1917 distinguished themselves by the declaration of national aspirations. Regional peasant congresses – provincial and district – in Kyiv region, Katerynoslav region, Podilla, Poltava region, Kharkiv region, Kherson region, Chernihiv one spoke in favor of the autonomy of Ukraine<sup>59</sup>. National problems were also considered by Ukrainian farmers in the councils of peasant deputies<sup>60</sup>.

The First All-Ukrainian Peasant Congress, which took place on May 28-June 2, 1917, put forward a comprehensive program of national and political revival: state and territorial autonomy for Ukraine, the introduction of the Ukrainian language in government and educational institutions, and the appointment of ethnic Ukrainians to leadership positions. The congress also

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<sup>55</sup> Волковинський В. Бойові дії на українських землях. *Перша світова війна 1914–1918 рр. і Україна. Українські землі у центрі цивілізаційної кризи* / упор. О. П. Реснт. Київ : Кліо, 2015. С. 28, 44.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. С. 27.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. С. 43.

<sup>58</sup> Лебедь Д. Крестьянство в революции. *Октябрьская революция: первое пятилетие*. Харьков : Государственное издательство Украины, 1922. С. 78.

<sup>59</sup> Верстюк В. Український національно-визвольний рух (березень – листопад 1917). *Український історичний журнал*. 2003. № 3. С. 71.

<sup>60</sup> Хміль І. Трудяще селянство України в боротьбі за владу Рад. Київ : Наукова думка, 1977. С. 30.

demonstrated the peasantry's perception of the Ukrainian ethnographic territory and raised the issue of protecting the rights of Ukrainians outside Ukraine<sup>61</sup>.

The support of the Ukrainian People's Republic realized the national feelings of the farmers. In 1917, an active part of the peasantry saw the Ukrainian Central Rada as a national government and expected the Provisional Government to recognize it, opposed the Provisional Government's instructions that provided for the dismemberment of the territory of Ukraine, and supported the proclamation of the UPR within nine Ukrainian provinces<sup>62</sup>.

The peasantry participated in the armed struggle to preserve the Ukrainian People's Republic<sup>63</sup>. The commitment of the peasantry to the UPR was clearly stated by its opponent, the Soviet government. One of the latter's analytical documents stated that as of 1919, "if they choose any of the existing authorities, the peasants see Petlura's government as the least evil"<sup>64</sup>. Jan Hamarnik, a well-known figure in the Bolshevik Party, did not hesitate to admit this in the Soviet press: "The Kyiv region was a foothold for Petliura's formations and active anti-Soviet protests in 1919 and 1920". And he noted that "...only in 1921... did it become a Soviet province in the sense that the Soviet apparatus took possession...even

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<sup>61</sup> Хміль І. В. Перший Всеукраїнський селянський з'їзд (28 травня – 2 червня 1917 р.). Київ : Поліграф. д-ця Ін-т історії України НАН України, 1992. С. 14, 20, 25–26, 34.

<sup>62</sup> Кугашев І. Селянський рух в Україні (березень 1917 р. – квітень 1918 р.) : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. К., 2003. С. 8–9, 11.

<sup>63</sup> Нестеров О. Селянський повстанський рух на правобережній Україні (1919 р.) : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Київ, 2001. С. 10; Зозуля Н. Повстанський рух на Середньому Подніпров'ї (1918–1922 рр.) за спогадами старшин армії УНР : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Черкаси, 2018. С. 12; Боган С. Повстанський рух в Одеській губернії у 1920–1923 роках : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Одеса, 2003. С. 15 та ін.

<sup>64</sup> Центральний державний архів громадських об'єднань України (далі – ЦДАГО). Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Частина 1. Спр. 39. Арк. 88.

of the village”<sup>65</sup>. This means that only the conquest of the countryside marked the victory over Petliurism. But even after the Ukrainian People’s Republic was ousted and the Ukrainian SSR was established, an active part of the peasantry remained committed to the UPR. The latter’s leadership controlled the anti-Soviet peasant movement in the 1920s<sup>66</sup>, and its collapse in 1924 was ordered by Symon Petlura<sup>67</sup>.

In the case of support for other regimes in Ukraine, the peasantry demanded that they resolve the national question and take into account the national interests of Ukrainian peasants. In the case of support for the Soviet government, Ukrainian peasants refused to participate in hostilities outside the territory of Ukraine. For example, in 1919, in the Radomyshl district of the Kyiv region, when the White Guards were approaching, the Bolsheviks mobilized local farmers, who were sympathetic to the idea. However, when they learned that they would have to fight outside Ukraine, according to a letter to Lenin from the head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Foreign Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (Boroborists), H. Hrynko, “...everyone ran away and spread the news to the surrounding villages...the news that Denikin is a few miles from our villages, and we are being taken to Great Russia...”. During the next mobilization campaign for the Red Army, “young people fled to the surrounding forests.” However, the peasants did not refuse to fight, expressing a desire to join the “Ukrainian Red Army” because they were “Ukrainian

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<sup>65</sup> Гамарник Я. Итоги 1921 года и ближайшие задачи. *Журнал Киевского губернского экономического совещания*. 1922. № 1. С. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Боган С. Повстанський рух в Одеській губернії у 1920–1923 роках : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Одеса, 2003. С. 15 та ін.

<sup>67</sup> Красносілецький Д. Антибільшовицький рух селян в правобережній частині УСРР у 1920–1924 роках : автореф. дис. ... канд. іст. наук. Чернівці, 2007. С. 13.

Bolsheviks” and categorically did not want to “go to Great Russia, because Denikin is standing ... near their villages”<sup>68</sup>.

In turn, the Bolshevik government treated the peasantry as a completely nationally organized community. According to a contemporary, a member of the foreign Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party of Ukraine H. Klunny, “the Soviet authorities burned whole villages ... and the peasant poor” and “shoots a member of their party (CPU) ... just because he declared his Ukrainian sympathies”<sup>69</sup>. And already as a consequence of such a situation, according to the information department of the Central Committee of the CPU, Ukrainian peasants “are afraid of the arrival of Soviet troops from russia like fire” and only “dream about their” Bolsheviks<sup>70</sup>.

The opinions of ordinary farmers regarding the fate of the national question in the conditions of Soviet power are conveyed by the conversation of the inhabitants of the village of Andriivka, Poltava province, which took place in 1919. An instructor from the provincial union of cooperatives who arrived in the village during a conversation with the villagers slandered that the Bolshevik party had a “dangerous view for the gains of the revolution” on national issue, then he got the support of those present. The interlocutors of the peasants, among them local Bolsheviks, said that the “ruling party” is proposing something that “doesn’t suit us” and that what the “ruling party” is striving for “it will not do”<sup>71</sup>.

National feelings, national motives in the behavior of the peasantry were a reality of the times of the revolution, violent and violent socio-political struggle of 1917–1920. Determination of the attitude to reality, participation in military actions in favor

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<sup>68</sup> ЦДАГО. Ф. 43. Оп. 1. Спр. 46. Арк. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Арк. 1–3.

<sup>70</sup> ЦДАГО. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Частина 1. Спр. 39. Арк. 88.

<sup>71</sup> Раузів С. На хуторах (Андріївське споживче т-во Демидів. волости Полт. пов.). *Полтавський кооператор*. 1919. № 5. С. 30.

of one or another government were also determined by the national interests realized by the farmers. Nowadays, it is difficult to judge how general the tendency towards a sense of national belonging was among the peasantry. Obviously, the national awareness concerned primarily the most socially and politically active part of the peasantry.

In the conditions of the revolution, there was a mobilization of the historically formed worldview of the Ukrainian peasantry and the aspiration to implement the cherished social dreams of justice into the practice of daily life. 1917–1920 were a period of high social activity of the peasant class, which reached the level of neglecting the interests of other social strata and representatives of their environment, physical destruction of opponents. The economic culture of the peasantry was characterized by an unconditional belief in its right to the landowner's estates and even to the property of socially and culturally related elements of the peasant society, readiness to solve material problems not by economic, but by force methods and armed forces.

The high level of social activity, determined by the ideals of economic existence and the conviction of the legitimacy of one's behavior, was combined with the locality of thinking and capacity for action in relation to general political processes, the lack of consistent attachment to the state-political entities that existed in the period 1917–1920. Behind this was the limited outlook and low level of awareness and education of the peasantry and its social inability to political consolidation on a nationwide scale. At the same time, behind such political behavior lay a completely rational and expedient position. In the absence of government regimes satisfying their interests, Ukrainian farmers effectively adjusted the work of their local peasant communities or naturally avoided participation in political life. The inability of the peasantry to form state power on a national scale was compensated by the support of those regimes of power that showed the potential to satisfy the aspirations of the peasantry. The existence of "peasant republics", which acted

as representatives of certain state-political entities, testify to the existence of a tendency to transform the peasant society into a segment of the political nation.

The understanding of their national affiliation by some segment of peasantry in the conditions of revolutionary events became an important factor in the political process and the results of the revolutionary struggle. The ability of certain state-political regimes to satisfy national interests has become a criterion for their assessment, loyalty or support from the Ukrainian peasantry. The attitude of farmers to the authorities was a manifestation of conscious national belonging.

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