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YOUTH OF THE UKRAINIAN PROVINCES OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE REVOLUTION OF 1905

UDZIAŁ MŁODZIEŻY Z UKRAIŃSKIEJ PROWINCJI IMPERIUM
ROSYJSKIEGO W REWOLUCJI 1905 ROKU

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Abstract: Youth participation in the revolutionary events of 1905–1907 began long before the beginning of the revolution. Opposition sentiments towards the regime ruling in the Russian Empire have been forming since the second half of the 19th century. Their activation coincides with the growth of the higher education system and organized illegal student life at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The presented article analyzes the main factors and forms of involvement of student youth in opposition academic, and later – political activities. The conclusion is substantiated that even during the revolutionary events of 1905–1907 there is no reason to speak of a consolidated political position of student youth as such. In the youth environment, there were various groups, and most of them were not inclined to political speeches under the conditions of meeting the basic requirements of academic freedom.

Keywords: youth, students, the revolution of 1905–1907, political culture, student organizations in the Russian Empire

Abstrakt: Udział młodzieży w rewolucyjnych wydarzeniach 1905–1907 rozpoczął się na długo przed początkiem rewolucji. Nastroje opozycyjne wobec reżimu panującego w Imperium Rosyjskim kształtowały się od drugiej połowy XIX wieku. Ich aktywizacja zbiega się z rozwojem szkolnictwa wyższego i zorganizowanego nielegalnego życia studenckiego na przełomie XIX i XX wieku. W prezentowanym artykule dokonano analizy głównych czynników i form zaangażowania młodzieży studenckiej w akademicki ruch opozycyjny, a później w ruch polityczny. Uzasadniona jest konkluzja, że nawet w okresie rewolucyjnych wydarzeń lat 1905–1907 nie ma powodu mówić o ugruntowanej pozycji politycznej młodzieży studenckiej jako takiej. W środowisku młodzieżowym istniały różne grupy, ale większość z nich nie była skłonna do aktywności politycznej w warunkach przestrzegania podstawowych wymogów zasad wolności akademickiej.

Słowa kluczowe: młodzież, studenci, rewolucja 1905–1907, kultura polityczna, organizacje studenckie w Imperium Rosyjskim

Introduction

Relevance of the research. The young generation has always been the most active in perceiving innovations, and reacting to social crises and upheavals. It is difficult to imagine a more or less significant political process or event in which youth would not participate in one way or another. But her role in revolutionary unrest is especially noticeable. It is known that during the revolution of 1917, the leadership and active members of radical political parties consisted of younger and partly middle-aged individuals (a classic example is the composition of the Central Council in Kyiv). And the majority of political figures of these parties, who were over 30 years old, had experience participating in the previous revolution of 1905–1907.

The purpose of the article and the historiography of the issue. The publication aims to highlight the problems of involvement and participation of student and apprentice youth of the Ukrainian provinces of the Russian Empire in the revolutionary events of the beginning of the 20th century, in particular in the revolution of 1905–1907. Student riots began in university centers of the empire long before 1905. During the years of the aforementioned revolution, students (and partly school youth) took an active part in revolutionary performances. The study of the circumstances of the involvement of school and student youth in political activity began shortly after the events in the first special works (Engel, Gorohov, 1907; Frommett, 1912). In the following decades, the publication of memoirs and documents, both in collections (1905 god, 1925; Sadovskyi, 1939; Chykalenko, 1939) and in individual editions, appeared in print (Doroshenko, 1949); some memories have been preserved in the funds of museums and archives (Chaikovska-Bukhanovska, 1962). O. Hermaize studied the participation of young people in the activities of the first political parties (Hermaize, 1926). Documentary collections dedicated to individual universities made

an important contribution to the coverage of the topic at the end of the 20th century (Kievskiy Universitet, 1984; Zaslavskiy, 1994; Moshynskiy, 1994). At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, this topic continues to be covered directly or indirectly in dissertation studies and individual publications (Datsyuk, 1994; Kryvobok, 2002; Popova, 2001/12; Posokhov, 2000/1-2).

Main results of the study

We will begin our analysis of the problem by studying the impact of the education system. Researchers note the harsh, sometimes barrack-like conditions of study in the comprehensive school (Popova, 2001/12, p. 67–68; Frommett, 1912, p. 70). In higher school, students enjoyed greater freedom. However, in order to prevent students from participating in political life, educational officials prohibited or made it extremely difficult for the legal self-organization of student youth. The administration of educational institutions controlled behavior, accommodation, and attendance at classes. Students were prohibited from any collective actions, they were expelled for voluntarily leaving the city in which they studied, etc. (Kievskiy Universitet, 1984, p. 44; Pravila, 1882, p. 14–16). The lives of pupils of closed educational institutions were even more regulated. The limitations of everyday life irritated young people with their pettiness, causing a sense of humiliation. It is significant that mass student riots in 1899 in St. Petersburg began with students' indignation at the rector's harsh announcement (Engel, Gorohov, 1907, p. 6–8).

However, as S. Posokhov noted, it was not so much the severity of government measures as the growing changes in the public consciousness that led to their rejection and confrontation with the administration (Posokhov, 2000/1-2, p. 113–114). Alienation from the school regime and official ideology were partly supported and provoked by the youth themselves. A graduate of

Kyiv University recalled those years: “we, the new generation, ... behaved, unlike our predecessors, like young sparrows, only waiting for an opportunity to pick on ... and raise a fuss” (Zaslavskiy, 1994, p. 357). The moods of young people were carefully monitored and tried to be used by political forces, which considered shortcomings in the education system as evidence of arbitrariness and the absence of the most important rights of a developed human personality («развитой человеческой личности¹») in the conditions of the existing state system (Engel, Gorohov, 1907, p. 13).

The word, mainly in literary form, combined with communication among like-minded people, was the strongest tool for spreading oppositional political beliefs. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, a significant amount of illegal literature was available to schoolchildren. The intelligentsia and students, even setting up underground libraries, spread it. I. Moshynsky mentioned that in the 90s there were 3 illegal student libraries in Kyiv. One of them belonged to Polish circles and had several thousand volumes, mainly on history and social sciences, and the other – the Ukrainian community (Moshynskiy, 1994, p. 271, 276–277). K. Chaikovska-Bukhanovska mentioned the existence of a circle in the Nizhyn women’s gymnasium (with the participation of students) in the early 1900s. Here they studied non-censored literature, fiction, and revolutionary. She pointed out directly: “The foundation of our worldview was laid here” (Chaikovska-Bukhanovska, 1962, p. 6–7). Such circles were widespread. D. Doroshenko mentioned that the majority of Ukrainian student-participants of the St. Petersburg community gained national consciousness “... still at home in Ukraine, belonging to Ukrainian groups that existed ... illegally ... in many gymnasiums and theological seminaries” (Doroshenko, 1949, p. 17).

¹ An expression from a letter from the Organizing Committee of the students of St. Petersburg University in the spring of 1899.

Illegal student organizations attracted young people to themselves, using their need for communication and support in an unfamiliar city. They included newcomers in their sphere of influence through the services of canteens, libraries, and mass events organized by them. Poor studentship was a favorable social environment for this. However, not only poor students were in informal societies. I. Moshynskiy mentioned that student organizations had funds and connections in various social circles (Moshynskiy, 1994, p. 272). The participation of the children of nobles and employees in revolutionary groups is noted in other memoirs (Chykalenko, 1939, p. 78).

It should be said that the growth of the activity of student organizations began in the 90s of the XIX century. In the conditions of that time, these societies operated illegally. At the same time, political activity (at least in the initial form of self-education) was an integral component of the life of student organizations, and its maintenance was one of the functions of their “infrastructure”. For example, student-dining halls served at the same time as a great meeting place for members of compatriots and underground revolutionary groups. Gatherings and unrests were planned here, literature was handed out, and party members sometimes gave statements and speeches (Moshynskiy, 1994, p. 273).

Due to the participation of members of political parties, student organizations were an important source of funding for the revolutionary movement. So, the manager of the first all-student canteen in Kyiv in the 1890s elected a social democrat. And the profit of this institution was spent mainly on the needs of the political “Red Cross” or on the coffers of other underground organizations (Moshynskiy, 1994, p. 273). Let me assume that this phenomenon reflects a characteristic psychological feature of student youth of that era: mobilization for practical activities mainly for the sake of ideological goals, and predominance of ideological attitudes over the needs of everyday life. The scale of the practical work of these centers

was significant, but the collected money often missed the students' pockets. Thus, according to D. Doroshenko's recollections, most of the profits from charity concerts for the benefit of Ukrainian students in St. Petersburg went to the coffers of the Student Ukrainian Community of this city for political purposes (Doroshenko, 1949, p. 23).

A characteristic feature of the youth opposition movement was revolutionary gatherings and unrests timed to the dates of birth or death of famous writers and artists. So, quite often the actions of student Ukrainian communities were timed to the anniversaries of the birth or death of T. G. Shevchenko (Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi istorychnyi arkhiv Ukrainy u m. Kyievi, hereinafter TSDIAUK, fund 317, od. zb. 1930, ark. 96). Famous revolutionaries were also honored. In particular, after the 1902 murder of Minister Sipyagin by the SR student Balmashov, the tradition of celebrating the memory of this terrorist spread among students, with speeches, gatherings, and demonstrations timed to the days.

The practice of terror was ambiguously perceived even among opposition youth groups. The writer O. Plyushch (a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party) addressed the problem of the justification of the means of achieving revolutionary goals using the example of a revolutionary who, during a terrorist act, killed not a traitor, but an associate. "This is a mistake – isn't it a mistake and all other similar cases? Isn't the whole me a mistake?..." (Plyushch, 1991, pp. 160–161). The young writer depicted the mental crisis and psychological trauma of members of underground groups who plunged into the political struggle without completely merging their morals and conscience with the demands of ideology. In January-March 1904, Kyiv Gendarmerie Department recorded 4 suicide attempts by students of Kyiv University, explained by the fact that they were destined to carry out terrorist attacks. It is characteristic that no evidence of their benevolence was found (TSDIAUK, fund 274, op. 5, od. zb. 23, ark. 15).

The justification for terror was that the ideology of the revolutionaries interpreted ethical problems in purely political terms. On the other hand, among the revolutionary groups, the authority of the church was rejected under the pretext of its subordination to the imperial regime. In one Ukrainian-language brochure it was noted: "... no one has ever had all kinds of Christian socialists, social politicians, etc., public healers, as true socialists, so there can be no question of them" (Hermaize, 1926, p. 79). Religious authority was replaced by ideological authority, which was reinforced by the relevant organization. O. Plyushch expressed the inner ideological motivation of the revolutionary as follows: "... the party knows a lot, many times more than he does, ... it knows almost everything: the party must bind and untie, liberate and... force" (Plyushch, 1991, p. 154).

The generational conflict, already traditional in modern society, was a prerequisite for the formation of the political culture of the youth. The differences between the formation of the worldview, the value system as the main goal of the youth, and the pragmatism of the older generation vividly reflect the memories of the participants of the events (Datsyuk, 1994, p. 32). Youth radicalism, in turn, strengthened the reluctance of revolutionary groups to compromise with the existing political circumstances. An example can be the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party (RUP), which, according to J. Germaize, was formed based on a semi-spontaneous protest against the traditional methods of the political activity of Ukrainophiles and the restraint of culturalists. Its members equally accepted both the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries and Esdec, as well as other Ukrainian groups that showed at least minimal revolutionaries. Students made up the largest part of the RUP, and conversely, the RUP had the greatest influence on Ukrainian students (Hermaize, 1926, p. 61, 78, 106).

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the activities of student organizations are increasingly

connected with political struggle. Zaslavskiy D. noted that for the active student minority, it was clear that both the union council of Kyiv University and the organization of the community were only a transitional stage to the “real deal”, although only a small circle was familiar with social democratic literature (Zaslavskiy, 1994, p. 362).

In the struggle for academic or political demands, revolutionary groups behaved in solidarity. The reason was not only a common enemy but also an effort to preserve the spirit of student corporatism. Under their influence, student self-government bodies also tried to establish norms of behavior that were connected with their ideological ideas and examples of intelligent culture. An example is a leaflet from the Kyiv Union Council of United Compatriots and Organizations, which criticized the association of nationalists, manifestations of student outrage on the streets and in beer halls, contempt for women, etc. The authors of the leaflet, fighting for the purity of student morals, condemned even the spread of sports associations in Kyiv, seeing them as surrogates of German corporations (TSDIAUK, fund 274, op.1, od. zb. 28, ark. 560zv.).

The corporate unity of the student body was necessary for mobilizing it for mass demonstrations. But during the student riots in the early 1900s, significant groups of young people remained within the walls of the higher school, far from revolutionary calls. Some of them even inhibited the hot intentions of their colleagues. However, unlike consolidated and organized radicals, moderate and conservative students did not have their organizational structures, and therefore could not successfully oppose revolutionary groups.

The events of “Bloody Sunday” in 1905 deeply shook the higher school. After a wave of student strikes, most universities were closed. On the eve of their opening in the autumn of the same year, the authorities made a number of concessions towards the liberalization of political life. In particular, the government declared the autonomy of higher education institutions and a ban

on police entering their walls to stop the riots. However, these measures had little effect on the politicization of many youth representatives. On September 23, the Kyiv security department stated: “The named educational institutions have turned into, as it were, a permitted place of open anti-government propaganda, which ... no one opposes...” (TSDIAUK, fund 442, op. 855, od. zb. 22, ark. 8,25).

But not all the student mass responded to the revolutionary appeals. Although from the first days of September, the revolutionaries did everything possible to attract her to the protest. Thus, on September 2, 1905, the gathering decided to open the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. The most radical students did not accept this and three more times, on September 9, 12, and 16, tried to sway the audience to their side, demanding the continuation of the strike. Moreover, although students from the university and outsiders, mainly workers and Jews, were also involved in the march, the radicals did not manage to achieve a quantitative advantage. On September 16, out of 1,000 people, 700 spoke in favor of the immediate start of classes. At the next meeting with the participation of more than 200 non-students, the radicals campaigned for the availability of lectures and meetings for all without exception. However, the majority of students opposed it (TSDIAUK, fund 442, op. 855, od. zb. 322, ark. 59-60). A different distribution of sympathies took place at the University of St. Volodymyr. On September 23, 400 young men who wanted to continue their studies separated from the total gathering of 5,000 (of which, according to the police, 500-600 were not students), and a fight broke out between these groups (Ibid., ark. 59). However, on September 30, 1905, 900 people voted against and only 500 voted for the vote on the admission of outsiders to the walls of the institution on the steps of the university. Finally, the gathering on October 8 reached a compromise: to start classes while continuing the political gathering (Ibid., ark. 90,109).

The majority of moderate students disagreed not only with the goals and methods of political struggle but also with the pressure on them from party colleagues. Their position is reflected in an address to the KPI audience in November 1905, in which it was said that various parties were circulating statements on behalf of the student body, based on the right of capture, and included a call for the pursuit of science without violence. The authors did not oppose campaigning but demanded that party students not force others to participate in politics (Ibid., ark. 177).

Such a distribution of the moods of young people was not only in Kyiv. In 1906, with the beginning of studies in Kharkiv, the police ascertained the division of local students into supporters of revolutionary organizations and a benevolent element that opposed the holding of rallies. In September, the majority of meetings adopted the resolutions proposed by the Social Democrats. Their demands were reduced to the opening of educational institutions not for classes, but for political activities. But the history of the preparation of the uprising, which was supposed to start from the university, showed that the results of the meeting turned out to be the result of the “breakthrough” activity of the revolutionary agitators rather than the firm position of the youth. On October 13, course elders (mostly social democrats) began collecting signatures among students about belonging to one or another organization in order to elect delegates to the Council of Student Representatives. The largest number of signatures were received by Social Democrats, approximately equally by SRs and Academicians. However, the largest part of the youth declared themselves outside the parties. “After long discussions ... the entire non-party mass joined the academic one, and from the latter, the overwhelming majority got into the Council of Student Deputies, which, firmly insisting... that the University is only for science...”, prevented the plans of the uprising. (TSDIAUK, fund 304, op. 1, od. zb. 112, ark. 229-230).

In the course of the development of the revolution, two opposite trends can be traced in the student environment. One began in the early 1900s and consisted of the transformation of student organizations into political factions. V. Sadovskyi mentioned that at the end of 1906, the Council of Student Representatives at Kyiv University was elected from the delegates of individual political groups (Sadovskyi, 1939, p. 13). One of the members of this council testified in court in 1908 that students were grouped into factions reflecting one or another worldview (Delo, 1994, p. 373). Another trend was characterized by B. Frommelt, who noted that since the fall of 1906, a transition from political to scientific activity was characteristic of many student circles, while support for socialist ideas gradually became less important, and even formal (Frommelt, 1912, p. 85–86).

However, many students did not support the views of fellow socialists. Another thing is that this part of the youth, as before 1905, was disorganized and quite diverse. It often did not even have its face, because the general name “academics” often covered only a small part of it, while the rest preferred to solve their own scientific, educational, and personal problems over participation in the affairs of student organizations. This group did not show much sympathy for the existing state regime, many of its representatives were simply satisfied with the provision of academic freedoms. There were few supporters of autocracy. In September 1905, they succeeded only in an anonymous statement to the Kyiv governor-general with a demand to close the university to stop the atrocities (TSDIAUK, fund 442, op. 855, od. zb. 322, ark. 50).

Conclusions

The involvement of students and secondary school pupils in political activity began long before 1905. The events of January 1905 were only the biggest impetus for the activation of the youth movement.

On the eve of the revolution, a certain political culture had already developed in the student environment. Its characteristic features were:

1. The predominance of idealistic and romantic attitudes among the most active students and the priority of revolutionary goals over solving the everyday problems of students of higher education. Therefore, student organizations became one of the sources of funding and personnel supply for opposition political movements in the Russian Empire, with which they were closely connected.
2. For supporters of radical student groups, the use of creativity and the commemoration of prominent figures of the past often served as an excuse for manifestations of political protest, obtaining their political benefits and propaganda. The struggle for moral purity, high standards of behavior, and culture was often used to rally the students around revolutionary activity and the establishment of a socialist worldview.
3. A certain separation of the principles of behavior of supporters of the revolutionary movement from traditional morality, which was based on church authority, due to the spread of views that justified the most radical measures to fight the existing political regime.
4. The weakness and amorphousness of conservative and purely academic groups, and the passivity of a significant mass of students created favorable conditions for control over the student movement (which is gradually moving to the level of political demands) by left-wing radical groups. The coherence of actions and tactics of socialist-oriented student factions also contributed to their success.

During the revolution of 1905–1907, the greatest organizational and propaganda activity among the youth was carried out by socialist radical groups. Therefore, in the studies of the Soviet period, which studied the activities of political student organizations only, the student mass appears precisely with a socialist and revolutionary face. Undoubtedly, this state of affairs was one of

the main goals of the work of the revolutionary factions, but the analysis of archival sources allows us to say that such a picture was desirable, but still far from reality, ideal for them.

The vast majority of students were opposed to the existing political regime. Yet, only sometimes did the revolutionaries manage to unite all students of the higher school in a common political action. After the temporary rules were issued on August 27, and even more so after the manifesto of October 17, 1905, a significant, and in some universities, the majority of young people reacted coolly to calls to further develop the revolution. Moreover, although the motives were different, in a number of cases this uncertain mass resolutely declared their interests, which were connected with the normal course of the educational process. However, this group lacked organization, a clear common position, and active leaders. Therefore, it was often the impression that the socialist factions of the youth had no competitors in the struggle for influence on the student body. In addition, in tactical actions, the revolutionary groups (the leading among them were the Social Democrats and SRs) acted together, although they did not abandon ideological discussions. Socialist organizations prevailed in terms of influence and the number of their opponents - conservatives and liberals, but there is no reason to talk about their complete dominance among students. However, they quite effectively involved young people in revolutionary performances.

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