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The “Ukrainian Question” on the Eve of the First World War

Abstract. After analysing the current socio-political conditions in Ukraine caused by the war unleashed on February 20, 2014 by the Russian Federation, the author noted that they have common features with those that were before the outbreak of the First World War. This fact made this study relevant, since it requires an analysis of the “Ukrainian Question” from the standpoint of different countries at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, the purpose of the study was to determine the essence of the Ukrainian national question on the eve of the First World War. For this purpose, the study used the methods of analysis and synthesis, comparison, deduction, generalisation, and historical method. As a result, the content of the “Ukrainian Question” was determined for the countries that participated in the First World War. In particular, it was established that Russia's goal was to capture Eastern Galicia, northern Bukovina and Transcarpathia, while under the auspices of the pan-Slavist policy and the Association of “Half-Blood Russian brothers”. Initially, Austria-Hungary also pursued the desire for territorial expansion, in particular, through the annexation of Volhynia and Podillia. As a result, the unification of Western and Eastern Europe was expected. Germany's goal was to divide the Russian empire into different territorial units and to seize the countries of Eastern Europe, in particular Ukraine, and settle its citizens on them. The positions of foreign countries on the “Ukrainian Question” considered in the study allowed for the conclusion that none of them considered the interests and aspirations of the Ukrainian people. The practical significance of the study was revealed in the fact that it can be used by modern researchers, in particular historians, when determining the prerequisites and nature of the current war of Russia against Ukraine

Keywords: territory, national state creation, national revolution, Pan-Slavism, national movement

Introduction

The study of the essence of the “Ukrainian Question”, namely in the modern conditions in which Ukrainians are located, is an acute problem that needs to be resolved. The relevance of this topic is conditioned by the fact that its foundations and problems are reflected at the moment in Ukraine, namely during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Thus, this necessitates not only the analysis of the “Ukrainian Question” on the eve of the First World War, but also the current socio-political conditions on the territory of Ukraine and Europe.

The problem of this study is that it studies the process of establishment and development of the Ukrainian nation, in the conditions of its division between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires. At the same time, establishing the essence of the problem of the “Ukrainian Question” before the First World War would determine the prerequisites for its occurrence and approaches to solving it. As for the emergence of this acute problem, it is characterised by a special historical duration, since it was formed at the beginning of the 20th century and, as modern events in Ukraine show, still remains relevant.

Many researchers from various fields, including historians, lawyers, geographers, and political scientists,

have investigated this issue, which certainly indicates its scope and special priority for the future development of Ukraine. Thus, P. Kostyuchok focused on the essence of the “Ukrainian Question”, in the context of one of the most controversial phenomena and harbingers of the First World War [1]. He established that at the beginning of the 20th century, Ukraine was the main object and tool for implementing the military plans of the main warring blocs, namely Europe (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, and Italy) and the Russian Empire. At the same time, he concluded that both sides aimed to satisfy only their own state interests, ignoring the wishes of Ukrainians, in particular, regarding the recognition of their independence and granting of sovereignty. A similar position is held by V.Yu. Seredyuk, as he argues that the events that took place on the eve of the First World War on the territory of Ukraine were demagoguery [2]. At the same time, he notes that based on its principles, representatives of Ukrainian territories were involved in specific enemy blocs, in order to use their material and human resources. In turn, M. Melentyeva considered the attitude of the Russian Empire to the “Ukrainian Question” [3]. M. Rohde was engaged in the analysis of Germany's approaches to the Ukrainian factor in the system of political interests of this country [4]. She

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is analysed Germany's approach to the Ukrainian factor in its system of political interests. The researcher found that the main goal of Germany was to form a colony and settle its own citizens on the territory of Ukraine. This interest was caused by the high agricultural potential of Ukrainian lands and developed human resources. The study of the Austrian policy on the "Ukrainian Question" was implemented by K. Ostafin [5]. In her study, she proved that Austria-Hungary wanted to push back the Russian Empire, in particular, to form a buffer zone, in order to protect its own territories. In addition, she claimed that Vienna supported the Ukrainian national movement, in particular, in the Austrophilic context.

Based on the above provisions, it was determined that the main goal of the study is to establish the basic principles and content of the "Ukrainian Question" before the outbreak of the First World War. For this purpose, the study performed the following tasks: the essence of the concept of "Ukrainian Question", and the Ukrainian national movement was defined; the main prerequisites for the emergence of such a "Question" were described; the positions of various states regarding Ukraine on the eve of the First World War were established; the common features of the "Ukrainian Question" in the period 1914-1918 with the current situation of Ukrainian territories and people were considered.

The originality of this study is conditioned by the fact that in it the author not only explores the essence of the "Ukrainian Question", but also compares the conditions in which it arose and the modern foundations in which Ukrainian society is now. Thus, the paper was able to describe common features in the ideology of the Russian political leadership, characteristic of the period of the beginning of the First World War and the 21st century, namely the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Materials and Methods

The study of the content of the "Ukrainian Question" on the eve of the First World War was based on an analysis of the attitude of other states to it. Thus, the analysis allowed dividing the topic of the work into such elements as the "Ukrainian Question", the Ukrainian national movement, and aggressive plans of foreign countries. Accordingly, this methodological tool was used to determine the essence and content of personnel that were established in relation to the territories of Ukraine on the eve of the First World War. The synthesis method primarily allowed considering each of the above concepts and describing their properties. In addition, on its basis, a link was established between them, which determined the object of this study.

The comparison method formed the basis for comparing the approaches and positions of different countries that participated in the First World War in relation to Ukrainian territories and citizens. On its basis, it was possible to determine the joint and distinctive plans of the states of Western Europe, and their strategic calculations concerning the division of Ukraine. The comparison was also used for discussion, in particular, to compare various statements of researchers with the opinions of the author and his beliefs.

The deduction was applied during the development of the logical structure of the study. This is explained by the fact that on its basis the main results and conclusions obtained were presented, which occurred in a certain line, namely from the general to the specific. In the study, this was reflected in such a way that at the beginning a general theoretical analysis of the "Ukrainian Question" was carried out, and then these provisions were concretised from the standpoint of the attitude of foreign states to it.

Since the study of the "Ukrainian Question" provided for the analysis of such a period as the beginning of the 20th century, its necessary condition was the involvement of the historical method of research. On its basis, it was possible to investigate the immediate historical events and conditions that formed the basis for the establishment of the Ukrainian national movement, and the implementation of the revolution. In addition, it allowed qualitatively considering the situation and historical aspirations of the states of Eastern Europe before the First World War, in particular, regarding the Ukrainian territories.

The generalisation was used to investigate the results obtained by the author, in particular, regarding the "Ukrainian Question", namely, its content and attitude on the part of European governments and the Russian Empire. In addition, it established the basis for studying the positions of other researchers that were formed during the discussion. In addition, the development and formation of conclusions is based on the method of generalization in the work, namely: embedding the main obtained results and provisions in their content.

The study was conducted in three stages. The first one defines the goal, objectives, and work plan. The analysis of the essence and content of the "Ukrainian Question" was also started, directly before the First World War. At the second stage, the positions of Austria-Hungary, Russia, Germany, and Romania regarding Ukrainian territories, as well as Ukrainian citizens were considered. In addition, a discussion was held at this stage, which allowed analysing the statements and opinions of other historians, in particular modern ones, on the issue of the Ukrainian national movement on the eve of the First World War. The third stage was the final one, since on its basis the results were summed up, in particular, conclusions were formed, and promising areas for future scientific developments were considered.

Results

At the beginning of the 20th century, the conditions in which European countries existed were characterised by geopolitical changes caused by the desire to expand their own territories and change strategic centres. The main hotbeds in Europe that existed in contradiction with each other and sought to resolve conflicts by military means were Germany, France, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. In fact, they did not compete with each other, but created two enemy blocks that represented different interests. This refers to the Triple Alliance, which included Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, and the Entente, which included France, Russia, and Great Britain. At the same time, both the first and second blocks aimed to seize new territories, which were characterised not only by a

good geographical location, but also by economic potential and high-quality human resources. Admittedly, in this context, their attention was drawn to the “Ukrainian Question”, since it was the Ukrainian territories that fully met the above conditions. Thus, the analysis of the content of the “Ukrainian Question” takes place from the standpoint of studying the attitude of foreign countries to the national movement in Ukraine and the Ukrainian people as a full-fledged nation [6].

First of all, it was noted that before the outbreak of the First World War, almost the entire territory of Ukraine was divided between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires. Based on this, special attention was paid to the attitude of the above-mentioned countries to the Ukrainian national movement and the desire of Ukrainians to recognise independence. The inconsistency of relations between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires is conditioned upon the desire to establish hegemony over Slavic countries, including Ukraine. This was confirmed by the statement of the Imperial Council ambassador of Cisleithania M. Vasilko in 1909 in the Austrian parliament, who substantiated the position on the need to resolve the issue of Russophile advances in Galicia and Bukovina [7].

Studying the peculiarities of the development of Ukraine as part of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, it was noted that to a greater extent they were conditioned by the features of capitalism. This was manifested in the high concentration of production, the great role of foreign capital, the development of monopolies and financial capital. Accordingly, in terms of the level of concentration of industrial production, Ukraine ranked among the first in the world. Despite this factor, attention was drawn to the fact that its economy was in decline, as it developed one-sidedly, while the main part of profitable industries depended entirely on Russia. As for the political structure, it was archaic, characterised by the unlimited autocracy of the Russian Tsar. One of the reasons for the manifestation of this factor was the lack of any force or representative body that could regulate or control the actions of the ruling elite. On this basis, there was not even a question of respecting civil rights and freedoms in Ukraine. This is confirmed by the fact that all segments of the population of the Russian Empire, including Ukrainians who lived in the territories that were part of it, were oppressed. At the same time, the working class, a significant part of which was made up of Ukrainians, was particularly oppressed, both in the economic and political context. Such harassment was seen in the time of the working day, as well as working conditions. In particular, workers had to work 12-13 hours a day, while not receiving wages or receiving them in scanty amounts [8]. In addition, work in production facilities was characterised by the presence of large fines, and the spread of infectious diseases and injuries. In addition, the situation of Ukrainians who lived in the territories that were part of the Russian Empire was negatively affected by the global economic crisis of 1900-1903. This is conditioned by the fact that it caused the closure of a number of factories and production facilities, which primarily provoked an increase in the unemployment rate. As a result, the Tsarist government only increased the exploitation of citizens, which was characterised by

an extension of the working day, and a decrease in the amount of wages.

In addition, spiritual categories, in particular the Ukrainian language, were also significantly oppressed. The author traced the chronology of the main historical events on the eve of the First World War, which in one way or another concerned the destruction of the Ukrainian language. Accordingly, in 1905, the Cabinet of Ministers of Russia rejected the request of Kyiv and Kharkiv universities to lift prohibitions on the Ukrainian language. As a result, the rector of Kyiv University refused 1,400 students to open four departments of Ukrainian Studies with the Ukrainian language of instruction. At the same time, the rationale for this position was that the university is a “national institution”, which is why only Russian can be spoken within its borders. In addition, the Decree of the Senate of the Russian Empire of 1908 determined that educational work in Ukraine is harmful and dangerous for Russia. Attention was also drawn to the Decree of the Prime Minister of the Russian Empire of 1910, on the enrolment of Ukrainians in the category of foreigners and on the Prohibition of any Ukrainian organisations [9]. All this testifies to the long-term anti-Ukrainian policy of the Russian Empire, which sought not only to seize Ukraine geographically, but also to destroy the Ukrainian nation.

Having studied directly the approaches and nature of Russia's activities on the territory of Ukraine on the eve of the First World War, attention was drawn to the fact that they were based on the principles of Imperial centralism, and most importantly: the destruction of all manifestations of national separatism. In this context, this refers to Galicia, since these territories were particularly dangerous and threatened the implementation of the aggressive plans of the Russian Empire. At the same time, the absolute majority of Russian society, both chauvinists and liberals, argued about the need to establish control over western Ukrainian territories, since they saw them as an objective threat to the integrity of Russia. This was caused by the development of a broad Ukrainian national movement, which included the establishment of Ukrainian schools, political parties, and national representations in the Sejm and parliament, which certainly testified to the perfection and success of the Ukrainian political movement. In addition, Russian society considered Galicia a hotbed of hostile separatism, since it was from there that Ukrainian propaganda took place, which began to gain its support in the territories of the Dnieper region.

As a result, one of the main tasks and reasons for the entry of the Russian empire into the First World War was the destruction of the Ukrainian national movement in Galicia. This was implemented due to the support of Galician Russophilia in western Ukraine, both financially and morally. To a greater extent, this was provided by Russian government and political representatives who carried out anti-Ukrainian propaganda, which testified to the true aggressive intentions of Russia to seize all Ukrainian ethnic territories, respectively, which at that time belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

On the eve of the First World War, ideas about the “Ukrainian danger” were formed in the Russian Empire. Moreover, the Russian Foreign Minister S. Sazonov, in his

speech, clearly noted that one of the main reasons for the deployment of the war was precisely the "Ukrainian Question" [10]. As a result, when entering the First World War, the Russian Empire proclaimed the slogan of liberating the captive Slavs.

Based on the analysis of Russia's policy and goals on the "Ukrainian Question" on the eve of the First World War, it was established that its politicians aimed to destroy any manifestations of Ukrainian nationality. This concerned the Ukrainian history, language, traditions, and other factors that testified to the long historical existence of the Ukrainian nation. The task of the Russian invaders was to ban all foreign (ethnic-Ukrainian) public and cultural organisations, and completely restrict or destroy Ukrainian religious structures, hearths of the Ukrainian language and political parties [11].

Having analysed the conditions of today, namely the war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine, the author confidently asserts that the approaches and actions of its political leadership are aimed, as centuries ago, at the destruction of the Ukrainian nation. Just like on the eve of the First World War, Russian society recites the goal of uniting the "Half-Blood Russian brothers" and destroying Ukrainian nationalists.

Special attention was paid to the analysis of the approaches of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as they were also clearly reflected in the solution of the "Ukrainian Question", immediately before and during the First World War. The influence of Vienna was characterised by the support of Ukrainophilism, as a result, it became the predominant current on the basis of which social life was established and implemented in Galicia. The support of the Ukrainian national movement on the part of Austrian officials was caused by the desire to satisfy their own interests. To a greater extent, their intentions concerned the support of the Ruthenians (Rusyns), the inhabitants of the Dnieper region, in order to form a positive attitude towards Austria-Hungary, in order to further separate them from the Russian Empire. In the end, Austrian politicians expected the annexation of part of the Dnieper region to the Habsburg monarchy, but its representatives aimed to independently separate from the Russian Empire and form a state entity in the territories of Volhynia and Podillia [12].

Unlike the Russian Empire, Austrian officials paid a significant part of their attention to the "Ukrainian Question" inside the country. This implies the Ukrainian people who lived in the territories of Galicia and Bukovina, since the success of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in rivalry with Russia depended on their support. At the same time, the Ukrainian movement, like the nation, in these territories did not pose a threat to any of the Eastern European countries, which is why they often received support. This is conditioned by the existence of a number of organisations and communities that only developed and expanded the nationalist movement of Ukrainians. Moreover, the Austro-Hungarian consul in Warsaw, L. Andrian, in a special memorandum entitled "The Importance of the Ukrainian problem of Galicia for foreign policy in general", noted that for a successful foreign policy and for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the support of the Ukrainian people takes the

first place [13]. At the same time, he noted that the future development of the history of Austria-Hungary depends on their attitude to the Ukrainian nation. Based on the analysis, it was noted that Austria-Hungary also aimed to expand its borders, in particular, at the expense of Volhynia and Podillia, while not destroying the Ukrainian national hearth and not implementing a policy of assimilation in the occupied territories [14].

Special attention was paid to the analysis of ideas and plans of Germany regarding the "Ukrainian Question". To a greater extent, they are determined by its goals for the whole of Eastern Europe, of which Ukraine is also a part. Germany's approaches were radically different from – the Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary – because they pursued the desire to form the Central Europe. The essence of this idea was the uncontrolled rule of Germany in the territories of Central Europe, for the future creation of world hegemony. After analysing the specific positions on the basis of which Germany sought to carry out its activities in relation to Ukraine, it was found that it partially supported its independence. At the same time, its political and military leadership adhered to the slogan in its actions: "whoever owns Kyiv can conquer Russia", which is conditioned by their goal, namely, the establishment of a buffer in Eastern Europe necessary to contain the Russian Empire, in particular, the protection of western territories [15].

At the same time, during the outbreak of the First World War, Germany saw the main task to defeat Russia and France, in order to exclude them from a number of large state entities. This is confirmed by the fact that in 1913 General Alfred von Schlieffen developed a military-operational plan for an attack on France and Russia, which resembled a blitz-krieg. His main idea was to eliminate these states as quickly as possible. In this context, the implementation of broad German territorial annexations was expected, which would result in the establishment of vassal states in the east and west of Europe. In this regard, Ukraine was a necessary tool based on which it would be successfully implemented. This is conditioned by the fact that the Ukrainian territories had valuable geopolitical and economic significance. In addition, on the eve of the First World War, German Chancellor Bethmann-Holweg, in his memorandum to the German ambassador in Vienna, noted Germany's intentions to provoke an uprising in Ukraine, as well as Congress Poland, the Baltic states, and the Caucasus in order to turn it into buffer states. Thus, it was noted that Germany's approaches provided for both geographical capture of Ukraine, as well as political and cultural, since they were aimed at establishing their own colony. This indicates that the "Ukrainian Question" was not supported by this state [16].

In addition, Romania also wanted to annex the Ukrainian lands, namely Bessarabia and part of Bukovina, undoubtedly subject to the favourable development of the First World War. At the same time, just like Germany, it did not focus on the Ukrainian national movement and support for the Ukrainian nation. The main goal was to acquire new land, which was characterised by high agricultural potential, and an increase in the number of the labour force. This plan was implemented, because in January 1918, as

a result of the collapse of the Russian Empire, Romanian troops occupied Bessarabia under the slogan of “unification of the entire Romanian people”. In addition, according to the provisions of the Saint-Germain [17], Trianon [18] and Neysky [19] peace treaties, Romania was assigned Transylvania, Southern Dobrudja, and Bukovina. At the same time, the interests of Ukrainians, who at the National Assembly of Bukovina spoke in favour of joining Soviet Ukraine, were not considered. As a result, the territory of Romania was expanded to 295 thousand km², which provoked an increase in the population to 17 million people.

Thus, it was established that the Austro-Hungarian Empire tried to support the “Ukrainian Question”, while wanting to include the Dnieper region in its composition. In turn, the Russian Empire, Germany, and Romania were not interested in its future development; on the contrary, their policy was aimed at its destruction and assimilation of Ukrainian territories.

Discussion

H. Bazhenova [20] investigated the “Ukrainian Question”, in particular, at the turn of the 20th century. Her study was mostly based on the study of the policy of the Russian Empire towards the “Ukrainian Question”. Accordingly, she concluded that as a result of the First World War, not only the Russian Empire was overthrown, but also the lack of a developed national policy was established. In addition, she argued that one of the main tasks during the First World War, which the Russian Empire set for itself, was the conquest of Eastern Galicia, Northern Bukovina, and Hungarian Ruthenia, which, respectively, were settled by conscious nationalist Ukrainians. This position is confirmed by the slogans of the Russian army: “May there be no more enslaved Rus!”, and also: “to the Russian people in Austria”. In addition, the goal of the Russian Empire was determined not only by geopolitical plans, but also by historical ones. This is explained by the fact that the Russian Empire wanted to destroy any facts and evidence of the historical development of Ukrainians as a nation, and stop the Ukrainian nationalist movement, which has become especially popular in the above-mentioned territories. The study agrees with these statements, moreover, the current policy of Russia is identical, in particular, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. This indicates that Ukrainians continue to defend their national interests and strengthen their ethnic identity.

In addition, the “Ukrainian Question” from the standpoint of German policy was studied by A. Goltsov [21]. He established that some German politicians sought to seize both the economic potential of Ukrainian territories and use them to satisfy their own interests. In this context, the researcher notes that the positions of such German figures were mainly based on the establishment of German control over Ukraine. Another group of political representatives of Germany provided for the possibility of forming and developing a partially independent Ukrainian state, but this should have taken place under the German protectorate. At the same time, such plans could be implemented only if the military conflict in the East developed favourably, namely, to weaken the Russian Empire. The author considers this position quite interesting in the context of

its continuation in future scientific developments, since it reveals two sides of the representatives of Germany at once, in particular, describes their differences.

In addition, the German experience in relation to the “Ukrainian Question” on the eve of the First World War was considered by B. Chernev [22]. His research was conducted from the standpoint of German industrialists, namely, their plans for Ukrainian territories and human resources. They were attracted to the developed natural resources of Ukraine, because if they were captured, they would be able to turn it into their own raw material appendage, which would certainly affect the country's economy. As for their political sentiments, the industrialists were in favour of completely taking control of Ukraine. At the same time, its independence could be only partial and in the necessary areas of life for Ukrainians. In his conclusion, he argues that such an approach would be quite effective since it would lead to the development of international relations on the territory of Ukraine. According to the researcher, such a position was unacceptable from the standpoint of the essence of the “Ukrainian Question”. It proves that the development of the Ukrainian nation cannot provide for the establishment of control over it by another country or even its assimilation. In turn, he believes that in this case, it would be advisable to combine the common interests of German industrialists and Ukrainians, but preserve the latter's independence.

Moreover, S. Blavatsky considered the “Ukrainian Question” separately from the specific positions of representatives of the European government [23]. His study is mostly theoretical in nature, as it reveals the content and foundations on which the Ukrainian national movement took place. At the same time, he somewhat criticises its representatives at that time, as he suggests that receiving assistance from other states, in particular, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was not appropriate enough. He substantiates this position by saying that the main idea of the “Ukrainian Question”, namely, gaining independence and establishing the Ukrainian nation, could not be implemented by representatives of other countries. He notes that the struggle for their ethnic identity should have been carried out directly by Ukrainians. In part, this study agrees with this opinion, since indeed none of the countries that somehow interacted with Ukraine sought its independence. On the contrary, these territories were seized in order to include them in certain states. The author supports the position of S. Blavatsky in the context that Ukrainians could only independently defend their national interests and gain independence and recognition.

From a different standpoint, the “Ukrainian Question” is considered by B. Dziewanowski-Stefańczyk since his research is based on the approaches of Polish scientists and figures [24]. Accordingly, he focuses on the threat of the Ukrainian national movement to other countries. The study is based on the example of Poland, which also had entities that sought to gain Polish independence. In this context, the main threat to the implementation of such plans was not the Russian Empire, but the Ukrainian nationalists, who focused their activities on Western Ukraine. Accordingly, representatives of the Polish nationalist movement believed that active pro-Ukrainian propaganda on

the territory of Eastern Galicia could lead to its loss by the Poles. The author considers this position unfounded, since in fact Ukrainians lived in ethnic Ukrainian territories, and therefore, if they gained independence, these lands should be part of Ukraine, and not Poland. At the same time, based on the conclusions obtained, the researcher suggests that they describe one of the factors of the biased attitude of the international community to the “Ukrainian Question” at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-1920.

In addition, attention was paid to the study by D. Bondarenko, because the researcher compared the positions of Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire specifically to the South Ukrainian factor [25]. The researcher noted that it was through the south of Ukraine that the cheapest and fastest route from Western Europe to the Middle East and India passed. At the same time, he established that Russia on the eve and during the First World War aimed to strengthen its position near the Black Sea coast in order to continue exporting its goods. In addition, it was in these territories that the main centre of agricultural activity was concentrated, the results of which were received by the Russian Empire. In turn, Austria-Hungary wanted to weaken Russia and its influence in the Black Sea basin. Its positions on the “Ukrainian Question” did not separate the South Ukrainian region, but rather represented it as a full-fledged component of Ukrainian territory. It was in their own interests that they saw the possibility of access to the Black Sea and a dynamic increase in economic potential. The author believes that the conclusions obtained require further investigation, in particular from the standpoint of other countries, namely Germany, since it also expressed a desire to seize the coastal southern territories of Ukraine.

Thus, the discussion allowed the study to establish that the “Ukrainian Question” at the beginning of the 20th century and today causes discussions since it contains a number of contradictory factors. Despite this, it was possible to separate different positions of researchers, in particular, those who describe and support the approaches of Germany, or Austria-Hungary, or the Russian Empire. At the same time, it was possible to describe both their common and distinctive features, which revealed the essence of the “Ukrainian Question” from different positions, and drew a parallel with the current social conditions in Ukraine.

Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was found that the “Ukrainian Question” can be considered from different standpoints,

in particular, the views of representatives of different European countries. However, its essence still remains unchanged, as it concerns the Ukrainian national movement, the desire to establish the Ukrainian nation and gain the independence of Ukraine. The paper established the attitude of the Russian Empire, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and even Romania to the “Ukrainian Question”. A common feature of the approaches that all the above-mentioned states have used in relation to Ukraine is the desire to seize its territories. However, the method and purpose of using human and land resources were somewhat different. In particular, it was established that the Russian Empire set two main tasks for itself in the First World War. The first was to capture new territories and to expand the Empire. The second concerned the destruction of everything Ukrainian, which could indicate the independence of Ukraine. It is because of this that the main attention of Russian officials was paid to Galicia, which was the centre of Ukrainian nationalism.

In addition, the paper investigated the “Ukrainian Question” from the standpoint of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, since a significant part of the western territories of Ukraine was part of it. There was no consensus on the role of this state in resolving the “Ukrainian Question” in historical doctrine. However, the author determined that, unlike Russia, Austria-Hungary did not oppress the Ukrainian national movement. At the same time, it was in this way that Austrian officials tried to gain favour in the Dnieper region and eventually seize it. Admittedly, this approach was not perfect, since it does not provide for the establishment of an independent Ukraine, which, accordingly, is the main “Ukrainian Question”.

Germany's position was fundamentally different, since it provided for the seizure not only of the territory of Ukraine, but also of other countries located on the territory of Eastern Europe. Since the goal was to form German colonies, the “Ukrainian Question” was not considered by German officials in any way and was not resolved. As for Romania, it also hoped to seize certain Ukrainian territories, namely Bessarabia and part of Bukovina, while pursuing a policy of assimilation on them. Thus, it was found that none of the countries under study was interested in Ukrainians and did not seek to satisfy them. In subsequent studies, it would be advisable to conduct a comparative analysis of the “Ukrainian Question” on the eve of the First World War and in the conditions of the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014-2022.

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«Українське питання» напередодні Першої світової війни

Анотація. Проаналізувавши поточні суспільно-політичні умови в Україні, що викликані розв'язаною 20 лютого 2014 року Російською Федерацією війною проти неї, автор відзначив, що вони мають спільні риси з тими, що були перед початком Першої світової війни. Цей факт обумовив актуальність роботи, оскільки він вимагає аналізу «українського питання» з точки зору різних країн на початку ХХ століття. Таким чином, метою дослідження було визначення сутності українського національного питання напередодні Першої світової війни. Для цього, в статті було застосовано метод аналізу і синтезу, порівняння, дедукції, узагальнення, а також історичний. У результаті було визначено зміст «українського питання» для країн, що брали участь в Першій світовій війні. Зокрема, було встановлено, що метою Росії було загарбання Східної Галичини, Північної Буковини та Закарпаття, при цьому під егідою політики панславізму та об'єднання «єдинокровних руських братів». Першочергово Австро-Угорщина також переслідувала бажання територіального розширення, зокрема завдяки приєднанню Волині і Поділля. У результаті очікувалося об'єднання Західної і Східної Європи. Німеччина мала на меті розділити Російську імперію на різні територіальні одиниці, а також захопити країни Східної Європи, зокрема Україну, та розселити на них своїх громадян. Розглянуті у дослідженні позиції іноземних країн щодо «українського питання» дозволили дійти висновку, що в жодній з них не було взято до уваги інтереси та прагнення українського народу. Практичне значення статті розкрилося у тому, що воно може бути використаним сучасними науковцями, зокрема істориками під час визначення передумов і характеру поточної війни Росії проти України

Ключові слова: територія, національне державотворення, національна революція, панславізм, національний рух