

Активізація студентського руху як передвісник суспільно-політичної кризи

Досліджено активізацію студентських рухів напередодні суспільно-політичних кризових ситуацій, що відбувались на теренах незалежної України. Розглянуто події 1990 р., 2000 р., 2004 р., у яких студенти брали активну участь. Вони випередили співвітчизників у намірах налагодити справедливий стан речей у державі, продемонструвавши свою прогресивність, що дозволяє вважати їх авангардом демократизації.

Ключові слова: студентський рух, суспільно-політична криза.

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The activation of student movement as a precursor of sociopolitical crisis

The activation of student movements before the sociopolitical crisis that took place on the territory of independent Ukraine is investigated. The events of 1990, 2000, 2004, which students actively participated in, are researched. They outstripped compatriots in intent to build a fair situation in the state, demonstrated their progressivity, which lets us consider them the vanguard of democratization.

Keywords: student movement, sociopolitical crisis.

Student movement is a kind of social initiative and public activity. It combines youth organizations, student governments, student unions and students in general and performs a variety of functions, including the involvement of young people in public life, its socialization in complex sociopolitical processes etc.

The topicality of the theme is that the events, which took place in 1990, 2000, 2004 in Ukraine, demonstrated the activity of the students that outpaced other segments of the population in intends to speed up the process of democratization of the political system through

their own organization and participation in nationwide actions. Therefore, the current political elite should objectively evaluate the activities of student youth while taking certain decisions, and political scientists should pay attention to the main students' messages while preparing one or the other prediction.

The examined issues are object of the analysis of many scientists, including V. Barabash, Y. Borodin, V. Burdyak, M. Golovatyy, V. Holovenko, K. Zakharenko, A. Zinchenko, M. Kerbal, A. Kruglashov, V. Kulik, D. Melnikov, N. Rotar.

The objective of the research is to determinate and evaluate the student movements' activation in the circumstances of the aggravation of sociopolitical situation.

Ukrainian state-building process involves the participation of all segments of the population in public administration. It is emphasized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives¹. And Constitution of Ukraine fixes the right of every adult to influence the processes that take place in society actively, participate in the administration of state and social affairs².

Youth, particularly students, has made an invaluable contribution to the construction of the Ukrainian state. Through the creation of the student governments, organizations, associations, foundations, sections with political parties, youth activists became an influential force, able to address important socioeconomic and political issues of modernity. Since the beginning of 90-ies of XX century student movement, as a part of the amateur movement in Ukraine, demonstrated itself in the political struggle which resulted in the proclamation of Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine in 1991³.

The process of student movement's conception in Ukraine, which is considered an indispensable condition for the formation of civil society, took place at the turn of two sociopolitical systems of development – the moribund Soviet, so-called «socialist» model and a new democratic one, which began to form in independent Ukraine, the experience of which is even now an example of practical youth action in the important process of building new Ukrainian state.

Three stages of the student movement's conception in Ukraine can be singled out. The first stage, covering the period from 1985 to 1988, is characterized by the appearance of numerous new little informal groups of young people seeking to fulfill their needs through integration into small groups with their peers, supporters, with the help of which they satisfied their personal interests. They were then distributed not only in Ukraine but throughout the whole Soviet Union. Notable members of such groups were fans, punks, rockers, metalists and others⁴.

The second stage of the student movement's development in Ukraine (1989- 1991) is characterized mainly by the emergence of the student governments in high schools and small organizations, the proliferation of youth discussion groups and clubs, that contributed to the preparation of young people to the need to perceive the lessons of history in a new

way, understand the current situation in the country, prepare themselves to an active struggle, work during the society's transition into a qualitatively new stage of sociopolitical development⁵. However, during this period educated youth sought to realize their needs with the help of political activity, confront, to some extent, those social institutions that were unable to organize new job, discard old dogmas and political orientations, understand the goals, objectives and prospects of sociopolitical movement in the country deeper.

The third stage in the conception of the student movement starts from 1991 and continues till nowadays⁶. At this time Ukraine has become an independent state and, as a result of it, youth policy started to be actively conducted. A number of normative acts regulating the social, educational and youth policy were adopted, which gave an impetus to even more powerful development of the student movement.

Understanding the current situation in the republic better than the other categories of young people, feeling the need for their own actions in democratic processes in society students among the first in Ukraine began to form youth groups and organizations, to be active in social and political life directly in educational institutions. Their actions manifested clearly the desire to do away with the old forms of management of higher education institutions, to achieve more rights and freedoms in solving the problems of higher education, the protection of students' interests.

During the years of independence sociopolitical situation in Ukraine has exacerbated three times, turning into crisis ones. These processes were responded in the most efficient and active way by the students, because, as it is known, it is the most progressive part of the population that is most likely to feel the approach of changes.

Thus, the Revolution on the Granite can be considered as the first example of Ukrainian students' foresight⁷.

In December, 1989 at the constituent congress in Kyiv a new student organization started its existence – Ukrainian Student Union (USU)⁸. The program of Declaration of the Union noted that the goal of USU was the fight for the rights of students. In addition, the student union opposed the inculcation of Marxist- Leninist ideology during the educational process, advocated for the rights of Ukrainian and enabling members of ethnic minorities, who were studying in Ukraine, to receive education in their native language etc. The peculiarity of the Ukrainian Student Union was that its membership included representatives of different, often with opposite views, community groups. The members of the USU included members of such political parties as Rukh (Movement), Union of Independent Ukrainian Youth, Kom-somol, Green party.

Significant development has been reached by student movement in Western Ukraine. The first of its manifestations was the creation of «Student Brotherhood»⁹ on the initiative of Lviv University's students in May 1989. Subsequently, the centers of student brotherhood began to operate in other colleges of the city. Among the students' program requirements

the following should be highlighted – disappearing of idealization during the process of education, the revival of national traditions of higher education, the protection of students from the university administration misconduct etc. Supporting actions of the regional organization of Rukh, «Student Brotherhood» became its member. Over time, members of the Brotherhood became not only students of the city, but also of other cities of Ukraine: Kyiv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk and others¹⁰.

One of the first actions of the «Student Brotherhood» was the organization of the youth strike in February 1990 in response to the arrest of Kyiv students. Students from western regions of the country involved very actively in the strike movement. They not only held mass protests, but also sent members of youth organizations in other regions of the republic to support local strikers¹¹. Not all of them managed to do that, but the fact showed that the students nucleated and began to operate the principles of solidarity in the fight for their rights, the achievement of «Student Brotherhood's» program goals.

The strike showed negative aspects of students' organization also. Absence of unified strike actions' management led to the fact that many students simply went home, leaving their struggle fellows in cities. But despite the existing disadvantages, spring students' strike showed that there was a very powerful political force in the country, which was able to stand up for their rights and interests to achieve radical changes in the sociopolitical life of society.

Thus, in autumn of 1990 the political situation in Ukraine became particularly acute. This was connected with the situation, prevailing in the country in connection with the preparation of the union agreement. Sensing the gravity of the situation in the country and the inability of Parliament to resolve the matter according to the interests of the sovereign state, members of the Ukrainian Student Union and Student Brotherhood launched unprecedented in the political history of Ukraine action on October 2, 1990 – a protest that turned into a political hunger in Kyiv on the October Revolution Square (now the Independence Square)¹². Participants of the hunger set a number of requirements to the Supreme Council of the Republic: to call new parliamentary elections on a multiparty basis; to accept the resignation of the Chairman of USSR Council of Ministers V. A. Masol; to adopt a resolution on the nationalization of the property of the CPSU and LCYLU; to abandon center's claims on signing the Union Treaty; to accept the decision about the return of all citizens of the republic, that perform military service abroad to Ukraine¹³.

Receiving support from the citizens of Kyiv, youth of the republic, experiencing the first physical effects of starvation (some students, who performed dry fasting, were transported to hospital intensive care units), without feeling the desire of Parliament to resolve their demands, the students came into active actions. Thus, on October 10 traffic on Khreschatyk Street was blocked and a meeting was held on the square, where tents of hungry students were placed.

Expressing their protest against the passivity of Parliament to manage the requirements of the students, showing solidarity to them, some deputies of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine from amount of the parliamentary opposition joined the youth, began fasting. On October 13-15 a nationwide students' strike was held in many cities of Ukraine in support of their peers. Feeling the solidarity of a large number of young people, citizens of Ukraine on October 15-16 students made a protest in front of the building of Verkhovna Rada.

Fearing an aggravation of the situation in Kyiv, connected with the actions of the students, having considered the requirements of the starving citizens and taking into account the results of the conciliation commission the Verkhovna Rada adopted a resolution on October 17 «About the consideration of the requirements of students that conduct a hunger strike in Kyiv from October 2, 1990», in which guaranteed the performance of their requirements¹⁴. Students were satisfied with promises, so they stopped fasting on October 18. However, subsequently officials failed to fulfill promises to the fullest.

In his book «Generation of the «Velvet» revolution» Oles Doniy, one of the activists of the Revolution on the Granite, at that time – the fifth year student of the history department of Kyiv University and chairman of Ukrainian Student Union says: «Student starvation became a symbol of birth of a new society. It was October in 1990, when young people acted like completely independent political force and has achieved success and became the starting point, not entirely divorced from the realities August in 1991 or agitated December in 1991. It was October in 1990 when «the generation of 1990» was recognized to be a separate historically social group»¹⁵.

The action of students' political protest through starvation became an important event in the struggle for democratic transformations, the desire of young people for determined radical changes in society. Two weeks of active students' protest showed that the youth of republic was a very significant and powerful force, that was able to stand next to the other layers of the population for the restoring of historical justice, radical political and economic reforms in the society, to fight for their rights and freedoms. Student movement raised to a new level of political consciousness not only of the young generation, but also of older people. Support to hungry students from some members of parliament of the republic, the citizens of Kyiv, Ukraine is a testimony of the solidarity of all layers of society with young people in the fight for national interests and social rights.

Political struggle, some misunderstandings between representatives of student organizations caused a need for a single student union. The Union of Ukrainian Students (SUS) was created¹⁶. Assessing the role of founding a new student union we should emphasize that it had made certain problems in the student movement that resulted in weakening of student youth's activity in spring and summer of 1991, the existence of some opposition between the leaders of student organizations. This led to further division in the students' ranks into separate parts according to their ideological or political views. Such politicization did not go

in favor of the student movement, as it joined the youth movement, becoming only a part of it, that questioned the true power of the students for years.

The second point in the political history of Ukraine, where students outperformed all other segments of the population, being ahead of the national movement, became nationwide action «Ukraine without Kuchma» in 2000-2001, which took place after the presidential elections in 1999, when L. Kuchma had been elected the head of state for the second time.

A researcher N. Rotar in her monograph «The political participation of citizens in systemic transformations during transitional period» examines mentioned above events. The paper notes that during 2000 Ukrainian students occasionally used protest forms of political participation along with other citizens: they took part in the capture of the Communist Party Central Committee building, the «Freedom Waves» and so on. However, these were not the events that could change the political status quo. The impetus for mass demonstrations of citizens against the regime became O. Moroz's statement in Parliament on November 28, 2000, where he published information about audio recordings of N. Melnychenko, that discredited presidential political course, methods, tools and principles for its implementation. It was the thing that had allowed to discuss the real state of democracy, freedom of speech, human rights and the nature of citizen participation in the political management of Ukraine openly¹⁷.

At the initiative of the Public Committee for the Protection of the Constitution «Ukraine without Kuchma», created from representatives of 20 political parties and civil society organizations, the involvement of citizens, among them students, to the perpetual protest began, stressing that «the application for the rally was officially filed by the party «Forward, Ukraine!», not because her looks were close to mass', but because V. Chemerys was a former student activist of the late 80's - early 90's»¹⁸.

So, in protest against the inaction of the authorities in finding missing Gongadze, the campground housed on the Independence Square in Kyiv, which was declared a zone free of Leonid Kuchma. The next day there appeared an alternative, protecting the current President, campsite. A series of peaceful actions where one party demanded the resignation of the President and the security forces, and the other – to support government policy, began. It is worth noting that students participated in activities on both sides of «barricades», which can be explained by the political fragmentation of student groups.

The authority's mobilization of students and other groups of population to support the regime prompted disgruntled citizens to greater use of log structures in the political system. The Parliamentary Committee on Science and Education received deputies' application, which indicated that students, their parents, educators appealed to the deputies «with request to halt pressure of the heads of educational institutions who unlawfully forced them to participate in public events, rallies, meetings» supporting L. Kuchma¹⁹. However, there was no response to these appeals of citizens.

Therefore, a variant of radicalization of citizens' protest forms was selected by the opposition forces, which was implemented on March 9, 2001 during the celebration of 187th anniversary of Taras Shevchenko's birthday. Thus, about 500 people from Vinnytsia, Volyn, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Kharkiv, Poltava, Kirovohrad, Kyiv regions arrived to Kyiv, who represented regional units of opposition parties and civil society organizations in capital's actions, among them were students of the famous Ukrainian universities²⁰. Several times they performed unsuccessful attempts to pass the police chain, that was aligned for the protection of officials, which 9 people were arrested for. After Kuchma, Yushchenko and other top officials laid flowers to the monument, students from Ivan Franko Lviv National University I. Bulyk and A. Chychelina dropped the baskets of flowers, placed by the state leaders, off the monument, which they were arrested for and taken to the Shevchenko district department of MIA of Ukraine in Kiev.

At the same time a founding congress of Ukrainian public committee of resistance «For the truth!» took place in Kyiv, which included a number of influential non-governmental organizations, namely Young Movement, Student Brotherhood, Ukrainian Student Union. The purpose of the committee identified the fundamental changes of authorities in Ukraine, the main strategy in the near future – creating student committees «For truth!» for the preparing a nationwide student strike. The same evening, at the central railway station of Kyiv police arrested 86 students, mostly from Lviv, Ternopil, Kyiv and Kharkiv, who participated in founding of the committee of resistance. The reason for the detention were badges and scarves with the words «For truth», national symbols and Ukrainian language; «it was enough to seem quite young, speak Ukrainian language and have Lviv passport registration»²¹; conduct of journalistic activity. For example, a reporter of Lviv newspaper «Progress» D. Shurhala, who was recording on tap the information about the detention of students, that participated in capital actions of UWK and the founding congress of Ukrainian Committee «For truth!», was detained at Kyiv railway station²².

Thus, through student and other online communication channels, as well as in the media, a reference to Ukrainian youth from elder comrades, who participated in the hunger strike in 1990, has been extended. They accused the regime of miserable amount of student scholarships, corruption in educational system, the conditions that made graduates go abroad and so on. The call for young people to support the removal of L. Kuchma's regime was a result²³. Thus, despite the administrative resources, correlation of rating of authorities and opposition was in favor of the latter, so demonstrators still had a chance of success.

Author draws attention to the fact that the protests in 2001 were a rehearsal, some kind of fitting of the forces on the part of students, which by this time until the time of the Revolution on the Granite have not taken an active part in anything, sitting in classrooms.

Thus, the author considers the third example of student predictions of sociopolitical exacerbations the Orange Revolution. In 2004 a noticeable shift in the political consciousness

of young people has happened. Numerous sociological studies have begun to capture the dynamics of the political activity of young people toward growth, and political participation of young people has attained a new focus and new forms of display²⁴. The researchers noted that young people as a social group was characterized by not only the typical «youth» qualities, but also by a number of new features, including a hidden inner potential of political activity, which under certain circumstances could be actualized and influence on political events²⁵.

A civil campaign «It's time!», which with a help of original actions sought to activate society, appeared a few months before the 2004 presidential election, when there wasn't a united orange movement yet. Young people, most of whom were students of domestic universities, organized actions outdoors, not campaigning for any candidate for the presidency, but urging people to be vigilant and the authority – honest.

Some analysts even compared Ukrainian political party «Pora!» with Serbian «Otpor», Georgian «Kmara», Albanian «M'yaft» and Belarusian «Zubr» and predicted to Ukraine Serbian or Georgian variants²⁶. This could not pass without interest of the current government. Raids began to be conducted in the offices of student organizations, during which police found explosive devices, grenades, which allowed to fasten the «terrorists» label on the young people. In Eastern Ukraine students started to be excluded from the universities. members of Lviv party «Pora» said that they were watched day and night. All this contributed to the subsequent development of events that went down in history of Ukraine under the name of «Orange Revolution».

The Orange Revolution started at the election night of the second round of presidential elections in 2004, when it became clear that the government did not promote fair elections and was ready to falsifications. The opposition urged Kyiv citizens to gather at the Independence Square. In the morning, people didn't go to work, the students escaped from classes – there were about three hundred thousand of people of Kyiv citizens alone at the meeting. A network of strike committees started to be created in universities of Ukraine to organize mass strikes in the case of fraud, the campsite was made, the activity of some state authorities was blocked. The Independence Square became a center and symbol of the Orange Revolution. The center of cultural life in the capital and the state shifted there. Another important feature of the Square was that its core and driving force was educated youth – and this was the evidence of the prospect of further development of democratic processes in the country. Viktor Yanukovich hadn't his own considerable electorate in Kyiv, neither did the incumbent President L. Kuchma. Attempts of some enterprises and institutions management to make subordinates to come to pro-government events didn't find the desired reaction.

It was that period when boys and girls, who were standing at the Independence Square or were its ardent opponents, became leaders of public organizations to continue to defend their interests.

After the described events an important factor in student movement in Ukraine became its interaction with political parties. Working with young people is, for sure, one of the major functions of each party. The relationships between them should ideally be built on the basis of mutual understanding, cooperation, and most importantly – autonomy. However, sometimes these relationships become too close. The mechanism of creating pre-party youth structures that involve student leaders for leading positions, promoting the establishment of networks of political parties' supporters, is already worked out in Ukraine today. According to the author, this is an incentive for active students' work, as student governments and social activities are elevators to the political elite. However, this is one of the reasons why student youth becomes overly politicized, and fight for their own rights and interests fades into the background.

Therefore, having considered the three main examples of aggravation of sociopolitical situation in independent Ukraine and participation of students in them, the author comes to the conclusion that students are harbingers of historical changes, because they are ahead of compatriots in recognizing the onset of the right time. Thus, student youth became active even before the Revolution on Granite in 1990, before actions «Ukraine without Kuchma» in 2000-2001, before the Orange Revolution in 2004, which allowed it to be in the front ranks of people who sought to break the course of established political realities.

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