

## **THE EVOLUTION OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL STATUS OF THE RUSSIAN MINORITY IN THE ETHNONATIONAL LEGISLATION OF STATE ENTITIES ON THE HISTORICAL TERRITORY OF UKRAINE (1917–1990)**

The article is devoted to analyzing the evolution of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the ethnonational legislation of state entities on the historical territory of Ukraine (1917–1990). The author found that the current (since 1991) peculiarities of the politicization of the Russian minority in Ukraine cannot be finalized without the knowledge of the parameters of its outlining in the evolutionary (before 1990) cut, in particular through the prism of awareness of the dynamics of changing of its political and legal status in the ethnonational legislation of state formations on the historical territory of Ukraine. It was established that the formation of the ethnopolitical legislation and the evolution of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the ethnonational legislation of state entities on the historical territory of Ukraine in 1917–1990 were step by step. They were initiated, then modified and even annulled by the fact of the formation and development of the constitutional and legal status of national minorities during the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky, the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic, the Western Ukrainian People's Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and only thereafter of the independent Ukraine. These milestones are the stages of the formation of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the context of the current ethnopolitical legislation of Ukraine.

*Keywords:* Russian minority, Ukraine, political and legal status, ethnonational legislation.

## **ЕВОЛЮЦІЯ ПОЛІТИКО-ПРАВОВОГО СТАТУСУ РОСІЙСЬКОЇ МЕНШИНИ В ЕТНОНАЦІОНАЛЬНОМУ ЗАКОНОДАВСТВІ ДЕРЖАВНИХ УТВОРЕНЬ НА ІСТОРИЧНІЙ ТЕРИТОРІЇ УКРАЇНИ (1917–1990)**

У статті проаналізовано еволюцію політико-правового статусу російської меншини в етнонаціональному законодавстві державних утворень на історичній території України (1917–1990). Виявлено, що поточні (з 1991 р.) особливості політизації російської меншини в Україні не можуть бути фіналізовані без знання параметрів її окреслення в еволюційному (до 1990 р.) розрізі, зокрема крізь призму усвідомлення динаміки зміни її політико-правового статусу в етнонаціональному законодавстві державних утворень на історичній

території України. Встановлено, що формування етнополітичного законодавства та еволюція політико-правового статусу російської меншини в етнонаціональному законодавстві державних утворень на історичній території України впродовж 1917–1990 рр. були етапними. Вони були започатковані, а потім модифіковані і навіть анульовані фактом становлення і розвитку конституційно-правового статусу національних меншин у період Української Народної Республіки, Гетьманату Павла Скоропадського, Директорії Української Народної Республіки, Західноукраїнської Народної Республіки, Української Радянської Соціалістичної Республіки, а лише після цього – незалежної України. Ці віхи є етапами становлення політико-правового статусу російської меншини в контексті чинного етнополітичного законодавства України.

*Ключові слова:* російська меншина, Україна, політико-правовий статус, етнонаціональне законодавство.

Institutionalization and politicization of ethnicity is one of the modern world phenomenon, as at the turn of the century along with globalization of world political and economic processes the more powerful become forces which stand for preservation of values, inherent to the ethnos in the sphere of culture or religion, social or political organization and so on. Russian minority in Ukraine is not an exception, being the biggest on the ethno-political map of the country and being the one, whose range of problems, since 1991, has been built over a range of political processes and international relations (first of all between Russia and Ukraine) in the post-Soviet space. At the same time, politicization and institutionalization of the Russian minority in Ukraine are not a clearly investigated pattern from the perspective of ethno-political forces in the post-Soviet space. On the one hand, it is rather investigated on the background of the processes taking place in independent Ukraine (since 1991), including the context of the evolution of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the ethnonational legislation. However, on the other hand, it is almost unstudied in the context of the evolution of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the ethnonational legislation of state entities on the historical (up to 1990) territory of Ukraine. Therefore, the aim of the current research is to fill up this gap in the context of comprehending reasons and peculiarities of the Russian minority in Ukraine, in particular from the perspective of determination its political-legal status in the historical retrospective. As current (after 1991) peculiarities of the Russian minority politicization in Ukraine cannot be finalized without reference to the parameters of its determination from the evolutionary perspective (up to 1990), in particular by comprehending dynamics of changes of its political-legal status on the historical territory of Ukraine.

Current range of problems has been predominantly described by the representatives of historical science, but it has been rather rarely analyzed from the point of view of political science and legal analyses. Among the most outstanding scientists who studied the evolution of political-legal status of the Russian

minority in the ethnonational legislation of the state entities on the historical territory of Ukraine (in particular over 1917-1990) are D. Doroshenko<sup>1</sup>, M. Hrushevskyi<sup>2</sup>, O. Kartunov and P. Mutskyi<sup>3</sup>, P. Khrystiuk<sup>4</sup>, O. Reent and B. Andrusyshyn<sup>5</sup>, Y. Rymarenko, I. Kuras and Y. Shemshuchenko<sup>6</sup>, L. Riaboshapko<sup>7</sup>, I. Varzar<sup>8</sup>, V. Vynnychenko<sup>9</sup>, V. Yevtukh<sup>10</sup> and many other. However, on the grounds of their scientific works there has not been created a synthetic and gradual understanding of the influence of evolution on political-legal status of the Russian minority on the historical territory of Ukraine till 1990 and on peculiarities of changes its status characteristics and politicization of the Russian minority since 1991.

In fact this is the subject of the research in the present paper. It is actualized due to the fact that on the territory of modern Ukraine historically coexisted representatives of various ethnical and national minorities, first of all Russians, and representatives of the titular nation-ethnos (who in accordance with quantitative characteristics occupies dominant position) – Ukrainians – and it always required from the state creation of historically corresponding conditions for providing their survivability. This, in its turn, presupposes and historically presupposed satisfaction of basic requirements of minorities by means of providing them with social welfare and resources in political, social economic and cultural spheres. As a result of the abovementioned circumstances in ethnopolitical sphere of Ukraine (both earlier and currently) the legislation is due to support international harmony and stability. It revealed in a bulk of national and international legal acts, which started regulating ethnopolitical sphere of human being, determining their status, ethnopolitical rights and liabilities of people and ethnonational communities, conditions of their development, self-actualization and their direct or indirect relations with the state<sup>11</sup>. In particular it was done to provide the minorities with legal means of maximum actualization, protection of rights and freedoms.

However, for historical reasons formation of the notion “Russian minority in Ukraine” was originated not only by direct peculiarities of ethnopolitical legislation in the country since 1991, but also by the fact of establishing and development of constitutional-legal status of national minorities, including the Russian one, over the period of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky, the Directory of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. They had a great impact on positioning the

<sup>1</sup> Doroshenko D., *Istoriia Ukrainy: 1913–1923 rr.: T. I. Doba Tsentralnoi Rady*, Uzhhorod 1932 + New-York 1954.

<sup>2</sup> Hrushevskyi M., *Khto taki ukrainsi i choho vony khochut*, Wyd. T-vo „Znannia Ukrainy“ 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Kartunov O., Mutskyi P., Osnovni teorii ta paradyhmy etnopolitychnykh prav, „*Naukovi zapysky IPIEND*“ 2001, vol 15.

<sup>4</sup> Khrystiuk P., *Zamytky i materialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii 1917–1920 rr.: u 4 t.*, Praha 1921–1922, vol 1.

<sup>5</sup> Reent O., Andrusyshyn B., *Ziedpovolenykh narodiv (8–15 veresnia 1917 r. abo 21–28 veresnia za n.st.)*, Kyiv 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Rymarenko Y., Kuras I., Shemshuchenko Y., *Natsionalno-derzhavne budivnytstvo: Kontseptualni pidkhody, suchasna naukova literatura*, Wyd. Dovira 1999.; Kuras I., *Etnopolityka: istoriia i suchasnist. Statti, vystupy, intervju 90–kh roktiv*, Wyd. In-t polit. i etnonats. doslidzh. NAN Ukrainy 1999.; Rymarenko Y., *Natsionalnyi rozvii Ukrainy: problemy i perspektyvy*, Wyd. Feniks 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Riaboshapko L., *Pravove stanovyshche natsionalnykh menshyn v Ukraini (1917–2000 rr.): Monohrafiia*, Wyd. Vydavnychi tsentr LNU im. I. Franka 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Varzar I., *Politychna etnolohiia yak nauka: istoriolohiia, teoriia, metodolohiia, prakseolohiia: Monohrafiia*, Wyd. Shkoliar 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Vynnychenko V., *Vidrodzhennia natsii: v 3 ch.: reprints*, Wyd. Polityvdav Ukrainy 1990, vol 1.

<sup>10</sup> Yevtukh V., *Etnopolityka v Ukraini: pravnychni ta kulturnolohichni aspekty*, Wyd. Feniks, 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Kartunov O., Mutskyi P., Osnovni teorii ta paradyhmy etnopolitychnykh prav, „*Naukovi zapysky IPIEND*“ 2001, vol 15, s. 158.

Russian and other minorities in the independent Ukraine (since 1991) and thus played an important role in the process of their institutionalization and politicization.

It was the period of the Ukrainian People's Republic (the UPR) when first in Ukraine the work concerning the creation of national-individual autonomy for the Russian people started. The Russian minority obtained the constitutional-legal status of an actor in politics. When in 1917 the Central Council of Ukraine was created 25% of seats in it were given to the representatives of national minorities (Russians, Jews and Poles). They were also represented in the General Secretariat of the Central Council of Ukraine. It corresponded with those statistical data, according to which every fourth citizen of the UPR was not an ethnical Ukrainian. Then ministries of the abovementioned national minorities were established. At the beginning of the Central Council of Ukraine M. Hrushevskiy stated the defenders of Ukrainian nationality would not be nationalists. In the brochure "Vilna Ukraina" he offered to consider any demonstration of Ukrainian chauvinism, exceptionality, zero tolerance towards other nationalities as a national crime. He criticized national intolerance and extremism, did everything possible to normalize interethnic relations in Ukraine.

All laws were published not only in Ukrainian but also in the languages of the mentioned minorities<sup>12</sup>. One of them was Universal I which stated that in towns and places where the Ukrainian people live together with other nationalities, citizens must come to understanding with "democracy of these nationalities" and along with that started to build "new and proper life." In its turn the 3<sup>rd</sup> Universal of the Central Council of Ukraine granted the Russian, Jewish, Polish and other nationalities, which inhabited Ukraine, national-individual autonomy to provide people with rights and freedoms of self-governing in their national life. The 4<sup>th</sup> Universal declared independence and sovereignty of Ukraine and emphasized that in the independent republic nations get the right of national-personal autonomy.

The leaders of the Central Council of Ukraine realized that in the multiethnic Ukraine it is possible to engage representatives of other nationalities, except the Ukrainians (titular nation) to the state forming processes by means of appropriate democratic ethnonational policy, in the basis of which is a corresponding legal base. It shows the intentions of the Central Council of Ukraine to solve the problem of alien population in Ukraine. That is why, the Ukrainian People's Republic adopted the Law "On national-individual autonomy" (d.d. 22.01.1918), which became a separate paragraph in the Constitution of the UPR (d.d. 28.04.1918). Consequently, it is quite obvious that politicians and activists of the UPR conducted liberal policy concerning other national minorities.

It is notable that the Central Council of Ukraine while elaborating this act used the idea of national-individual autonomy, proposed by social democrats from Austria, one of the most multinational countries of that time in the world. The scheme of national-individual autonomy provided an opportunity to satisfy the interests of personality, nation and country simultaneously, without violating the territorial integrity of the country or without disturbing progressive integration processes. This type of autonomy had several names. First of all, it was called

<sup>12</sup> Riaboshapko L., *Pravove stanovyshebe natsionalnykh menshyn v Ukraini (1917–2000 rr.): Monohrafiia*, Wyd. Wydawniczyi tsentr LNU im. I. Franka 2001, s. 40.

national-individual (it presupposed inclusion of an individual into a certain national community on a voluntary personal basis). Secondly, it was called exterritorial, as it was not toughly connected with the territory. Thirdly, the autonomy was referred to as cultural, because its competence was usually restricted by the sphere of culture. The authors of the Austrian-Marxist concept were K. Renner and O. Bauer. The point of it was that the source and exponent of national rights had to be not territories but nations. If to be more precise – national unions, created on the basis of voluntary personal application of a citizen. Despite the quantity of the nation or population, territory of their inhabitation, real protection of national rights must be ensured only in case when a nation becomes an actor, but not an object of justice, and the state must represent and protect national-cultural, language and religious interests. On the basis of applications submitted by national adults there should be created a national inventory, which would register affiliation of people with some national groups and national minorities were interpreted as collective actors in politics.

Policy of protection of national minorities in the UPR was predetermined by the resolution of people's conference (September 1917) as follows: «a) complete territorial delimitation of peoples inhabiting Russia is not possible; b) among them there are nations which do not make the majority in any of the regions; c) national-territorial autonomy does not finally solve the issue of national minorities and small nations»<sup>13</sup>. The Law on national-individual autonomy composed of 10 articles, which made a separate paragraph "National Unions" in the Constitution of the UPR. The Law was prepared for the General Secretariat of National Affairs. It included certain mechanism and three variants how national minorities could obtain autonomy.

In Article 1 it was stated that each nation which inhabited Ukraine, had the right in the frames of the Ukrainian People's Republic for national-individual autonomy and the right for individual organization of their national life. It had to be executed by the bodies of the National Union, whose authority spread over all its members despite the place of their inhabitation within the boundaries of the Ukrainian People's Republic. It was an inseparable right of a nation, and none of the nations could be deprived of this right or restricted in it. Article 2 mentioned that national-individual autonomy mentioned by the law was granted to the Russian, Jewish and Polish nations. Belarusian, Czech, Moldavian, Tatarian, Greek and Bulgarian nations could also apply for gaining national-individual autonomy in case if they submit to the General court an application, signed by at least 10 000 people of the UPR despite their sex, religion, and being not restricted by the court in their rights. Other nations had to submit applications to the parliament. The General court had to consider an application at the public meeting not later than 6 months of the day of submission, and inform their decision to the Council of People's Ministers and publicly declare it (their decision).

According to Article 4 the National Union had a right of legislation and governing within the competence, established in accordance with the procedure, defined by Article 7 of the law. It involves: the scope of cases, which are in competence of the national union and its separate bodies, how the structure of institutions were defined by provisions of the constituent assembly of a certain nation, which also defined the order of strengthening

<sup>13</sup> Reent O., Andrusyshyn B., *Zizd ponevolennykh narodiv (8–15 veresnia 1917 r. abo 21–28 veresnia za n.st.)*, Kyiv 1994, s. 51.

its provisions. Adopted provisions, which concerned the scope of competence of the National union, were to be reviewed and adopted by the constituent assembly of the UPR or its parliament. Arguments, which could arise on this ground between the national constituent assembly and the Constituent assembly of the UPR or parliament, had to be solved by the Conciliation committee, which consisted of an equal number of the representatives of these bodies. The provisions of the constituent assemblies were finally adopted by the Constituent assembly of the UPR or its parliament the National union had the right of representativeness of a certain nation, which lived on the territory of the UPR, before various state and civil organizations.

In the world practice it was one of the first laws concerning national-individual autonomy, which covered it by general constitutional regulations. Thus, the Central Council of Ukraine achieved unquestionable results while actualizing the rights of national minorities. First of all, it was activity conducted by the leaders of the Central Council of Ukraine as to including representatives of national minorities into its composition. At the early stage such representativeness was introduced under the territorial (county, Ukrainian colonies in Russia, cities Odesa, Katerynoslav, Kharkiv), professional and party principles. However, starting with the mid-summer in 1917 the latter were supplemented by the national principle<sup>14</sup>. Another significant direction of the Central Council of Ukraine's activity in the sphere of satisfying the rights of national minorities was creation in the structure of executive bodies the following authorities: firstly as a part of the General Secretariat and later in the Council of national ministers – General secretaryship (ministry) of international affairs and three ministerial positions (ministers) (of Russian, Jewish and Polish affairs). All of them had the powers of the government members.

Nevertheless, as D. Doroshenko stated, the situation concerning Russian-speaking population was extremely difficult at that time: «It was almost impossible to speak of any great Russian, which lived in Ukraine in separate colonies, as this meant not some really great Russian village, which were sprinkled among the ethnographic mass in Chernihiv, Katerynoslav, Kharkiv regions, or anywhere else, and even not about workers from Donetsk mines, who were predominantly wealthy moskals; it was about the population of the majority of cities, which composed of russified Ukrainians with inclusions of natural moskals, who lived in Ukraine as officials, soldiers, merchants, workers<sup>15</sup>. These elements went native with Russian culture, were brought up in it, appreciated it, and shared all-Russian ideological aspirations. They did not want to recognize themselves in Ukraine as a “national minority”, and treated restrictions of Russian cultural influences and growth of anything Ukrainian as a decay of culture in general. But to separate such people into any specific nationality was rather difficult due to the fact that contemporary “Russian” or “little Russian (maloros)” could nationally acknowledge their place and become Ukrainian. And “on the contrary, Ukrainian-socialist, becoming Bolshevik, regarded “Ukrainian nationalism” as something regressive” and hostile to the interests of “labor masses” and started fighting against the Ukrainian movement”<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Khrystiuk P., *Zamitky i materialy do istorii ukrainskoi revoliutsii 1917–1920 rr.: u 4 t.*, Praha 1921–1922, vol 1, s. 85–86.

<sup>15</sup> Doroshenko D., *Istoriia Ukrainy: 1913–1923 rr.: T. I. Doba Tsentralnoi Rady*, Uzhhorod 1932 + New-York 1954, s. 270–271.

<sup>16</sup> Doroshenko D., *Istoriia Ukrainy: 1913–1923 rr.: T. I. Doba Tsentralnoi Rady*, Uzhhorod 1932 + New-York 1954, s. 270–271.

Unlike the UNR's policy, political course adopted by Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadsky was aimed at the restriction of existing rights and freedoms of the Russian minority, which was gradually losing its constitutional-legal status. The secretary of the government declared the incompatibility of the law and national ministries with the political situation in Ukraine. In July 1918 Hetman annulled the law on national-individual autonomy and abolished national ministries. On the contrary, when the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic came to power it confirmed the force of law on national-individual autonomy. During its administration to adopt national ministries were temporary created a department of national minorities' affairs. However, taking into account various circumstances, only one of them, a department of Jewish rights started functioning. V. Vynnychenko explained it by the fact that the Jewish minority had no countries-protectors. That is why, Ukrainian Jews had just one direction to follow – focus on the Ukrainian state. Speaking of political forces which represented the interests of the Russian national minority than under the condition of unstable domestic and foreign situation in Ukraine it refused from cooperation with the Directory in questions concerning building the Ukrainian nation. During the time of the Western Ukrainian People's Republic (WUPR) minorities were granted personal autonomy with the right of their representation in the government. However, the legal status was granted only to some most numerous national minorities, like Germans, Jews, poles, but not Russians.

In its turn, the first Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR of 1919 defined the terms “national minorities” and prohibited any forms of national minority discrimination or restriction of their equality. Practical steps made in the direction of Ukrainization, i.e. conducting the process of derussification of the state or social-political life in Ukraine and development of the Ukrainian language and literature were Declaration of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee “On use of the Ukrainian language in all establishments on a par with great Russian” (February 21, 1920). This as well as the Declaration made by the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR “On measures in the course of Ukrainization of educational and cultural establishments” (July 1923), and the Declaration of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian “On measures concerning equality of languages and promotion of the Ukrainian language development” (August 1, 1923). The latter document was presupposed to carry out Ukrainization of educational and cultural establishments, and gradually introduce the Ukrainian language in all Soviet institutions. To do this it was planned to open Ukrainian language schools in all establishments. Along with Ukrainization the policy in the sphere of national relations was aimed at implementation of special measures focused on promoting political and cultural development of national minorities, and taking into account ethnical factors while conducting administrative and territorial division. At the same time administrative division presupposed division of various types of regions – original and national. From this perspective it should be mentioned that till 1930 there were 450 Russian national councils (among 1087). Similar actions were fixed by the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR in 1929, as it gave a possibility to create administrative units in places, where existed areas of compact settlement of national minorities.

However, in the late 20s – early 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the national policy experienced crucial changes, connected with formation of the command-and-control system in the Ukrainian SSR. The course in the national policy of Ukraine (Ukrainian SSR) was aimed at winding down the policy of Ukrainization and key changes in working with national minorities. Under the pressure of Moscow in Ukraine the party bodies adopted decisions on the basis of which at first was conducted a “clean-up” and then liquidation of educational establishments, where studying was conducted in national minorities’ languages. But these issues in no way concerned the status of the Russian minority. The decisions concerning closing and reorganization of cultural-educational establishments, newspaper and journal editorial offices, was coming into force. From the point of view of the command-and-control policy the state conducted reorganization and liquidation of national territorial-administrative units as those which did not justify themselves. At the end of the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century along with liquidation of national districts and council, the system of national local government in Ukraine stopped functioning. The results of such policy were repressions towards alien population of Ukraine: dismissal from work due to people’s national affiliation; deportation of the representative of national minorities from the areas of their compact living; fabrication of spying, diversionary, revolutionary organizations (consisted of Ukrainian, German, Polish, Greek, and other “nationalists”). The main peculiarity of the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR in 1937 was deficiency of the term “national minorities”. Non-recognition of minorities, disregard towards them and their prohibition were rather indicative during the 40s-50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It should be emphasized that starting with the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine (Ukrainian SSR) occurred the shift in the statuses of the used languages. The Russian language was interpreted as the language of a predominant ethnos across the USSR, whereas Ukrainian, in fact, was the language of a minority within the scope of the USSR.

In the 50s-60s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine/Ukrainian SSR the needs for national development were ignored by the system. Under the slogans of “proletarian internationalism”, “flourishing and proximity of nations”, “formation of a new historical commonness of the Soviet people” the system carried out the policy of Russification and denationalization of ethnical groups, fought against the displays of “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism”. Quite destroying effect had the false thesis concerning the national question in the USSR. In 1935 A. Andreev stated that “national question in our country could be regarded as finally settled”. At the official level there were recognized only two tendencies – flourishing and proximity of nations. That is why the policy was aimed only at forcing international proximity. Among the changes in questions of minorities’ rights and freedoms protection was the fact that the Russian community was interpreted as a predominant one.

In the early 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine/Ukrainian SSR the fight against cosmopolitanism and anti-Semitism started. The legal acts of that time did not disclose the term of “national minorities” either. And only in the late 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the USSR due to the deep transformations in its domestic and foreign policy started “ethnic renaissance”, which became one of the reasons for further collapse of the USSR. This “ethnic renaissance” was predetermined by a range of internal and external reasons, which characterized the development of the international society after the WWII:



strengthening of social and territorial mobility of population in countries, regions and continents; trade-economic and tourist connections; scientific and technical revolution; information explosion; growth in ethnic tessellation of humanity; strengthening of internationalization and integration etc.<sup>17</sup>.

During the reformation period the Constitution of the Ukrainian SSR was altered and amended, as several legislative acts aimed at democratization of the electoral system, equality of languages, freedom of conscience and religion, education, culture and local self-administration were adopted. At the same time the term “national minorities” in the regulatory-legal acts of Ukraine/Ukrainian SSR over the period of transformation was not defined, and national minorities (including Russian) did not get the constitutional-legal status of political actors. However, political reality of that time Ukraine created the necessity to elaborate the model of international relations and legal basis for ethno-national policy actualization. As a result, changes in the ethno-political perspective contributed to the increase in national self-consciousness; provoked national minorities to self-organization and ethnical identification and politicization of ethnoses. The process of active engaging of ethnical groups to the domestic and foreign political life of Ukraine/Ukrainian SSR started. That is why Ukraine (in fact being a part of the Ukrainian SSR) faced the necessity for critical reconsideration of a place and role of a national factor in the life of the society. During this period in the basis of Ukrainian legal acts were put ideas of the founders of Ukrainian sovereignty M. Hrushevskyi<sup>18</sup> and V. Vynnychenko<sup>19</sup>, as well as theoretical and methodological best practices of Ukrainian ethno-political thought. However, it coincided in time with the proclamation of independence of Ukraine, what goes beyond the time frames of the present research.

Drawing conclusions we argue that over the history of Ukrainian sovereignty in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was clearly realized that ethno-political legislation is a complex of national and international legal acts, which are functioning in the ethno-political sphere of human reality, defining the status, ethno-political rights and liabilities of a person and ethnonational communities, preconditions for their development and self-actualization, which regulate their relations (directly and indirectly) with the country. Together with that, formation of ethno-political legislation and evolution of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the ethnonational legislation of state entities on the historical territory of Ukraine over 1917–1990 were gradual. They were initiated, then modified and even annulled by the fact of the formation and development of the constitutional and legal status of national minorities during the period of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi, the Directory of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, the Western Ukrainian People’s Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and only thereafter of the independent Ukraine. These milestones are the stages of the formation of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the context of the current ethno-political legislation of Ukraine.

<sup>17</sup> Rymarenko Y., Kuras I., Shemshuchenko Y., *Natsionalno-derzhavne budivnytstvo: Kontseptualni pidkbody, suchasna naukova literatura*, Wyd. Dovira 1999, s. 465.

<sup>18</sup> Hrushevskyi M., *Khto taki ukrainsi i choho vony khochut*, Wyd. T-vo „Znannia Ukrainy” 1991.

<sup>19</sup> Vynnychenko V., *Vidrodzhenia natsii: v 3 ch.: reprints*, Wyd. Politvydav Ukrainy 1990, vol 1.

At the same time, the achievement of the Ukrainian People's Republic was formation of the concept of the national-individual autonomy of the Russian people and ensuring the representativeness of the Russian national minority in the structure of the executive bodies. During the epoch of the Hetmanate of Pavlo Skoropadskyi there occurred restriction of the rights and freedoms of the Russian minority, which lost its constitutional-legal status (as the national-individual autonomy was abolished, national ministries were closed). When the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic came into power, there was partial renewal of national-individual autonomy. In the Western Ukrainian People's Republic the principle of personal autonomy and selecting representativeness of national minorities in the bodies of power was applied (and the Russian minority did not have its representation). On the contrary, the growth of the status of the Russian ethnical group happened in the period of Soviet Union. At the beginning (1919 – late 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) there was establishment of equal opportunities for representatives of different national communities. Then (since late 20s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century) started the process of restricting the rest of individual autonomy of minorities in favor of the Russian ethnical group in the frames of the USSR (in the process of taking repressive measures against any manifestations of Ukrainian nationalism): in the legal sphere the notion of “national minority” was completely destroyed, in fact there was a shift in using languages (the Russian language became predominant across the USSR, while Ukrainian was the language of minority). In the 50s-70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century took place further ignorance of national development and political and legal status of national communities, as the practice of proletarian internationalism, “flourishing and proximity of nations”, “formation of a new historical commonness of the Soviet people” was commenced. And only in the 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century started the stage of “ethnic renaissance” and informal revival of ideas concerning renovation of the political and legal status of national minorities in Ukraine. Thus, current political positioning of the Russian minority in Ukraine, its institutionalization and politicization is still largely a result of a variable and multidirectional evolution of political and legal status of the Russian minority in the ethnonational legislation of state entities on the historical territory of Ukraine over 1917–1990.

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