

Peculiarities of structural construction and ideological positioning of the All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda”

Evolution of the Vse-Ukrainske Obiednannia (hereinafter VO) “Svoboda” (the All-Ukrainian Union “Freedom”) has been traced back; special attention has been paid to the issues of the leader in the organizational structure and the state of inner-party democracy. A high level of centralization and leadership format in the structure of the party has been justified. On the basis of the analysis of the party documents the ideological positioning of the party in the context of such variables as: radicalism, left-right positioning has been determined. It has been proved that the AU “Svoboda” most fully correspond to the parameters of radical and national ideology, combining left and right approaches with populism as an integral element.

Key words: political party, organizational structure, democratic centralism, party’s statute, party’s program, ideology

Особливості структурної побудови та ідеологічного позиціонування ВО «Свобода»

Проаналізовано еволюцію ВО «Свобода», особлива увага приділена питанням ролі лідера в організаційній структурі, стану внутрішньопартійної демократії. Доведено високий рівень централізації та лідерський формат побудови партії. На підставі аналізу партійних документів окреслено ідеологічне позиціонування партії в контексті змінних: радикальність, ліво-праве позиціонування. Стверджено, що ВО «Свобода» найбільш повно відповідає параметрам радикальної та націоналістичної ідеології, поєднує ліві і праві підходи та інтегруючим елементом виступає популізм.

Ключові слова: політична партія, організаційна структура, демократичний централізм, статут партії, програма партії, ідеологія.

Since Ukraine proclaimed independence in 1991 a permanent feature of its political arena were and still remain nationalistic political parties among which it is usually possible

to qualify right and radical parties¹. To them also belong the AU "Derzhavna Samostiinist Ukrainy" (DSU – the State Independence of Ukraine), Ukrainska Natsionalna Asambleia – Ukrainska Natsionalistychna Samo-Oborona (UNA-UNSO – the Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian National Self-Defense), Sotsial-Natsionalistychna Partiiia Ukrainy (SNPU – the Social-National Party of Ukraine), Kongres Ukrainskykh Natsionalistiv (KUN – the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists) and a number of other formations. Nowadays, to these parties belongs the VO "Svoboda", Natsionalno-Vyzvolnyi Rukh "Pravyi Sektor" (the National-liberation struggle "Right Sector"), Natsionalnyi Korpus (the National Corps). Among the abovementioned parties a special place is occupied by the AU "Svoboda", which derives origin from 1991, though in February 2004 the party's name was changed from SNPU into the VO "Svoboda. During 2012-2014 the party was represented in the parliament and nowadays according to the parameters of its activity must be qualified as a national/all-national political party, what allows to treat it as the biggest one among national political forces. The aim of the paper is to analyze the evolution of the organizational structure of the party and its ideology. We strive for investigating the extent to which the VO "Svoboda" is characterized by the foundations of the inner-party democracy and how the level of democracy/centralism is correlated with dominant ideological parameters of the party.

In the course of the research we have studied the program and statute of the party in all its versions (when some changes or amendments took place), conducted a number of interviews with the party members and experts, and analyzed the results of the sociological studies as to people who support or vote for the VO "Svoboda".

In the course of the SNPU/VO "Svoboda" it is possible to single out three stages, which predetermined the change of qualitative characteristics:

1. from foundation of the SNPU in 1991 to February 2004, when at the 9th congress the name was changed in to the VO "Svoboda";
2. from 2004 to 2014, when the process of enlargement took place and the level of electorate support grew. But this stage the party entered the parliament;
3. since summer 2014 when the level of support started dramatically decreasing as a result of which the party could not overcome an electoral threshold at the early parliamentary elections in 2014. This stage is currently characterized by a partial loss of members; decrease of activity in a number of regions throughout the country and consistently low level of support among potential voters what does not allow the party to enter the parliament independently.

¹ Bokalechuk V.O. Modern tendencies of right radicalism development in the Ukrainian society // Strategic priorities, 2011. № 3 (20). – C.39-44; Tanchin I., Lutsyshyn H. Ukrainian right radical parties after the Revolution Dignity // Political sciences, 2016, № 2. – C.43-48; Likhachov V. Ultra-right extremism as a threat to Ukrainian democracy [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://ccl.org.ua/position/ultrapravyy-ekstremizm-yak-zahroza-ukrajinskij-demokratiji>

Evolution of the organizational structure of the VO “Svoboda”

Unfortunately, we do not have documents, which would provide us with a possibility to conduct a substantial study of the organizational structure of the party at the stage of its functioning as the SNPU. That is why we will focus our attention on the transformations of the grounds of the organizational structure of the VO “Svoboda”, put an emphasis on the issues of inner-party democracy and in particular the position of the party’s leader. The statute of the VO “Svoboda” was adopted by the 9th congress of the SNPU in February 2004; later on it was changed and amended at: the 13th congress of the VO “Svoboda” on June 17, 2006; the 20th congress on May 24, 2009; the 30th congress on February 7, 2015 and 37th congress on October 14, 2016.

The Statute of 2004 presupposed the formation of the leadership-type party with an absolute domination of the Head of the Party. According to the Statute the structure of the party presupposed central bodies and local party organizations. Correspondingly to the central bodies belong the Political Council and Control and Auditing Commission, whereas to the local bodies belong party organizations at the primary, district, town, Kyiv city and Sevastopol city, regional, the Crimea Autonomous Republic levels². The position of the leader in the structure of the party authority was guaranteed on the basis of the following statutory provisions: paragraph 4.5 “During the periods between the congresses of the party operating control over the party’s activity is conducted by the Head of the VO “Svoboda” and the Political Council of the VO “Svoboda”; paragraph 4.6 “The Political Council of the VO “Svoboda” is formed at the congress upon the recommendation of the Head of the VO “Svoboda”. The Political Council of the VO “Svoboda” is managed by the Head of the VO “Svoboda”. Each member of the Political Council of the VO “Svoboda” is subordinate and accountable to the Head of the VO “Svoboda”. The construction of the absolute power of the party’s leader is supplemented by paragraph 4.10 “Upon the recommendation of the Head of the VO “Svoboda” the Political Council of the VO “Svoboda” appoints the heads of the state organizations” and paragraph 4.11, which presupposes the right of the Political Council of the VO “Svoboda” to dismiss district, town and primary party organizations. The Statute quite strictly determines the position of each member of the party. According to paragraph 2.7 the member of the party is prohibited to speak out, sign documents and come out with public announcements on behalf of the party, if they are not authorized in written form. The Statute as well presupposed suspension of the party membership due to the decision taken by the Political Council, if the latter assumes that the party member violated the statutory norms.

In the Statute, adopted at the 13th congress of the VO “Svoboda” on June 17, 2006 were introduced new regulations, concerning new leading bodies of the party – the Political Executive Committee and the Party Court. Some provisions concerning the competence of the party’s leading bodies were broadened. In particular, paragraph 4.5 formalized that “in the period between the party congresses the party is operated by the Head of the VO “Svoboda”, the Political

² The Statute of the VO “Svoboda” approved by the 9th congress of the SNPU on February 14, 2004 // Current archive of the VO “Svoboda”

Executive Committee "Svoboda" and the Political Council of the VO "Svoboda"³. However, paragraph 4.2 confirmed the right of the Head of the Party to introduce recommendations as to the whole composition of the Political Executive Committee and the Political Council for a two-year term. Besides, on the grounds of paragraph 4.13 the Head of the Party conducts human resources management, approves and removes heads of regional organizations and party organizations of the AR of the Crimea, Kyiv and Sevastopol cities.

In the Statute adopted at the 20th congress on May 24 1999, it is possible to trace a further attempt to "broaden parameters of the inner-party democracy" by means of a more specified documentation of powers of all structural departments. However, additionally the leadership role was assigned to the Head of the Party: paragraph 4.6 formalized that in fact the Head runs the Political Council, only the Head is entitled to convene it and that every member of the Political Council "is submitted and accountable to the Head of the VO "Svoboda"⁴. Paragraph 4.7 determining competence of the Political Council documented that only upon the recommendation of the Head of the Party the heads of central departments of the party, heads of structural bodies and departments of the central body, heads of local party organizations (apart from the heads of regional organizations), members of the ruling bodies of these organizations are appointed and dismissed. As to the heads of the regional party organizations, then in accordance with paragraph 4.13 the Head of the Party "offers candidates for the position of the regional organizations at the meeting (conference)". In paragraph 4.12 in particular it goes that the Head of the Party "... is the highest position in the party and conducts overall control over the VO "Svoboda" ... at the same time is the Head of the Political Council and the Head of the Political Executive Committee". Paragraph 4.13 states "that the Head issues orders and instructions".

In the Statute adopted at the 30th congress on February 7, 2015, which was approved with changes and amendments by the 37th congress on October 14, 2016 the vertical construction of the party organization was acknowledge, which, according to paragraph 3.1 presupposed: central bodies and local party organizations to which belong: regional, city (of regional significance), district in the town, town (of district significance), country district and village organizations⁵. The party preserved a high level of centralization and strict parameters of a predominant position of the party leader – the Head of the Party. However, it is possible to trace an attempt of formal representation of collegial format of the party management. In particular, in accordance with 4.5 in between the party's congresses the party is run by the Head, the Political Executive Committee and Political Council and according to paragraph 4.6 only the Political Council is declared to be the highest managing body in between the congresses. On the other hand, the real role of the Head of the Political Council is described in paragraph 4.6, where it goes that the Head manages the activity of the Political Council and that each member is submitted and accountable to the

³ The Statute of the VO "Svoboda" approved by the 13th congress of the VO "Svoboda" on June 17, 2006 // Current archive of the VO "Svoboda"

⁴ The Statute of the VO "Svoboda" approved by the 20th congress of the VO "Svoboda" on May 24, 2009 // Current archive of the VO "Svoboda"

⁵ The Statute of the VO "Svoboda" [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://svoboda.org.ua/party/charter>

Head of the VO “Svoboda”. In similar way the relations between the Head of the Party and the Political Executive Committee are determined. According to paragraph 4.9 “each member of the Political Executive Committee of the VO “Svoboda” is submitted and accountable to the Head of the VO “Svoboda”. Such interpretation of the Head of the Party as the highest position has not been changed and was confirmed by paragraph 4.12. in the same way paragraph 4.13 regularized that namely the Head conducts human resources policy in the party, hat is specified by the norms concerning recommendations to the positions of heads of regional organizations and appointment and dismissal of the heads of local organizations and their bodies, acting heads of the regional, city (of regional significance), district in the town, town (of district significance), country district and village organizations. The right to issues orders and instructions has been justified. The focus of the party statute is put on a party member, who in accordance with paragraph 2.5 “is obliged to execute orders of the party leaders”.

The issue concerning the compliment of political parties in Ukraine only seems to be an easy one. All parties in their structures comprise organizational departments, which are aimed at keeping record of all party members, and correspondingly it is justified to expect information as to the real state and changes in numbers of party members, reported at the party congresses. However, in fact it is very difficult to find such information. Parties’ representatives prefer to report on general information and not specific data, concerning the number of parties’ members. Herewith, it is possible to observe demonstration of positive tendencies instable increase in party membership. Despite public demonstration of openness, parties do not provide researchers with information as to party members, explaining it in different ways. Predominantly they refer to the necessity to secure personal information and desire to avoid negative consequences for party members, especially in a case when a party is in opposition. Nowadays, on a non-confidential basis, such information may be found in Wikipedia articles, devoted to political parties, where the quantitative composition of a party at a certain period of time is stated (according to such information on September 19, 2018 the VO “Svoboda” comprises 15 000 members)⁶. There are also formal requirements of the legislation from the Ministry of Justice concerning registration of a political party, where there are criteria of the presence of party organizations in two-thirds of regions and two-thirds of districts and at least 10 000 signatures what allows to have a hypothetical view as to the minimal number of party members. However, we do not have verified data both at present moment and in the retrospective of development/evolution from the moment of its foundation. Among available publications it is necessary to mention data, provided by A. Shekhovtsov. He presents the following dynamics: 1991-92: 30-40 members; 1995 – 1000 members; 2003 – 10 000 members; 2009 – 15 000 members; 2010 – 15 000 members; 2012 – 20 000 members⁷. It is difficult to check these numbers and correspondingly

⁶ The All-Ukrainian Union “Svoboda” [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Всеукраїнське_об'єднання_«Свобода»

⁷ Shekhovtsov A. VO “Svoboda”: the problem of legitimacy in fight for power. – P. 206 [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: uamoderna.com/images/archive/2013-20/shekhovtsov.pdf

to confirm or refute this information. The only available source is information provided by the party members and those who were in the party earlier⁸. The most doubtful is the number of 10 000 in 2003. In 2005 the Center for political studies in Ivan Franko Lviv National University conducted a research concerning party organizations on the eve of the parliamentary elections in 2006. Within the scope of the research we interview the heads of regional party organizations as to the situation in party organizations, and among the questions were those concerning general-party characteristics. The representatives of the VO "Svoboda" provided an approximate number of members – 4 000⁹. However, on the basis of the statements of the former members of the SNPU, at that time the party was in a deep crisis, concerning the membership and the given figures caused some doubts. The abovementioned number they believed to be significantly exaggerated, arguing that the events organized by the party at that time, it was incredibly hard to find a required number of participants among the party members and "one person had to carry two flags at one time". The interviewed representatives of the party (both former and actual) testify that the biggest number of party members was observed in 2012 and was about 20 000, and that the approximate number of members in September 2018 must be about 8 000 – 9 000 members. Correspondingly, the number given in the Wikipedia causes justified doubts.

As it is seen the centralized model with an absolute domination of the Head of the Party adopted at the party congress in 2004 has been preserved in all versions of its Statute. The role of party members is described exclusively as subordinate participants, who are obliged to execute orders of the party management, first of all the Head of the Party. A high level of centralization as well as discipline is contributed to by the statutory party court, as one of the highest leading bodies and the presence of internal security service, as to the statements made by former party members. Under such conditions it is theoretically possible to speak of a certain level of the inner-party democracy. Among these norms we may name a provision concerning formal choice of the heads at all level, including the Head of the party and presence of the institute of the party congresses and meetings. In fact, the party absolutely represents the provisions/foundations of democratic centralism¹⁰, inherent to communist parties and which do not deny the cult of the party leader both within the party and the country in general.

⁸ In case when party members do not operate data on the basis of the party members record cards, they can be mistaken either deliberately to show power of the party structure which they belong to or not intentionally do that. In the latter case the evaluation on the basis of indirect factors like participation in the party's actions of different kind, will not always be verified. This is because at the party activities quite often participated representatives of affiliated nationalistic organizations, whose members not always were the representatives of the party or among whom only some part could be members indeed.

⁹ Political parties in Lviv region on the eve of the 2006 elections: Textbook-reference book/ Compilers: Romaniuk A. S., Stochyliak L.S. – Lviv: TsPD LNU im. I. Franka, 2005. – P. 46.

¹⁰ The principle of democratic centralism lied in the basis of establishing and functioning of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. It presupposed: appointment for all party positions and bodies from the bottom upwards by election; accountability of higher bodies to lower ones; party discipline, when minority is submitted to the decisions of majority. Functionally this principle served for the fight for power and contributed to it.

Peculiarities of ideological positioning of the VO “Svoboda”

The issues concerning ideological positioning have been partially studied in the publication by A. Shekhovtsov¹¹ and a conjoint publication by S. Kononchuk and Ya. Yarosh¹². The latter focused on the program of the SNPU (1991) and the VO “Svoboda” in 2004 and 2011 in the formats: “left” - “right” and “liberal” - “conservative”, according to the formerly determined system of indices. The authors came to the conclusion that “the predominant ideological characteristic in the party programs of the SNPU – VO “Svoboda” is a strongly articulated nationalistic component, which we interpret as a variant of conservative ideology”¹³.

To evaluate the ideology of the party we must analyze the program of the SNPU and several versions of the VO “Svoboda” program: 2005 (adopted at the 12 congress); 2009 (adopted at the 20th congress) and current version of the program as of 2018.

A. Shekhovtsov states in the process of registration of the SNPU program the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine required to eliminate provisions: 1, 6, 11, 13, 14, 15, 29¹⁴ (enumeration of provisions is determined on the basis of comparison of the contents of these provisions, according to the information provided by A. Shekhovtsov and the contents of the program, published in the collected volume by the I. F. Kuras of Political and Ethnic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine¹⁵). The determined nuance in the program causes some questions: first of all, the program was published by the board of authors of the collected volume and the program which is kept in the archive of the party, to which we got an access, are identical and include 31 provisions/paragraphs; secondly, the program used in the collected volume, as to the statements of those who compiled it, was received in the Ministry of Justice and the abovementioned provisions were not excluded. We may assume that the Ministry of Ukraine required excluding those provisions, but technically they were not eliminated from the text of the program. Correspondingly, if we follow A. Shekhovtsov’s version that there was such a requirement and the SNPU had to comply with it, it could have been done just technically “for the sake of appearance”, but within the party as a working document they left the program with 31 provisions/paragraphs.

The program of the SNPU is characterized by the following features: 1) the program of the party, which is aimed at “taking political power in Ukraine to create a new state and new society” (p.1), in general the notion “struggle” is constantly used in the program; 2) nationalistic, though it does not formalize the format of ethnic nation, but it is latently registered in the document: “to give an Ukrainian a chance to see the world from the Ukrainian point of

¹¹ Shekhovtsov A. VO “Svoboda”: the problem of legitimacy in fight for power. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: uamoderna.com/images/archive/2013-20/shekhovtsov.pdf.

¹² Ideological positioning of political parties in Ukraine / Ukrainian Independent Center for Political Studies: S.H.Kononchuk, O.A.Yarosh. – K.: Agency «Ukraine», 2013. – 52 p.

¹³ Ibid. – P. 42.

¹⁴ Shekhovtsov A. Ibid. – Pp.180-181.

¹⁵ The program of the Socialist-National party of Ukraine // State, power and civil society in the documents of political parties of Ukraine (late 1980s – first part of 2011). – K.: IPIEND im. I. F. Kurasa NAN Ukrainy, 2011. – P. 181-183.

view, return them national character" (p.12), "consider Ukraine as a state of the Ukrainian nation" (p.17); 3) Ukraine-centrism: "Ukraine is a geopolitical center of Eurasia... We transform an out-of-date slogan "Independent Ukraine" into a slogan "Great Ukraine" (p.15), "new world, new society, which are so expected by the humanity at the beginning of the 3rd millennium will descend from Ukraine" (p.31); 4) anti-Russian position: "the SNPU considers Russia to be the first cause for all misfortunes in Ukraine" (p.6), "struggle against pro-Moscow community spirit and Moscow influence over Ukraine – is one of the primary tasks of the SNPU" (p.11); 5) anticommunism: "the SNPU is an uncompromising opponent to the communist ideology and political parties as well as social movements, which propagandize and implement it into life. The SNPU believes that due to the communist ideology a person and the society degenerate intentionally by means of substituting moral and ethical values" (p.13). formally declaring the desire to build political life on the basis of a multi-party system (p.18) and do not "fight with oppositional parties and movements" by means of their prohibition (p.19), in the program the stress is made on the wish of the SNPU to become a "ruling party" (p.19) and declaration that "The SNPU interprets all other political forces as national-collaborators-betrayers of the Ukrainian revolution or to national-romantics – unfertile flowers of the national revolution, who are capable of nothing except some "revolutionary" phrases" (p.14). Correspondingly all other parties except the SNPU easily fall to those which can be prohibited: "Only those political parties and social movements will be prohibited, which in their programs or their actions bear a wish not to change the political system but to destroy the Ukrainian State" (p.18). Besides, the program does not include any notes concerning legislation and rule-of-law state (except the right for private property – p.25), but on the contrary states that "the SNPU to achieve its tactical tasks does not chain itself by dogmas, but takes advantage of the moment, constantly remember its strategic goals (p.29).

Therefore, the SNPU's program can be qualified as nationalistic, anticommunist, anti-Russian and non-democratic. It includes such requirements, which are characteristic of right-wing parties, concerning the nation as a value, religion. From the text of the program, despite the usage of the notion of national-socialism, it is difficult to draw a conclusion as to correspondence of the program to the ideas of classic national-socialism of the Third Reich.

The program in the version of 2005¹⁶ preserved key characteristics from the SNPU's program: 1) Ukrainian nationalism: determined as a program aimed at protecting Ukrainians in Ukraine, i.e. the emphasis is consciously made on the ethnic component. Besides, it is presupposed: to adopt the legislation on Citizenship, according to which citizenship will be granted only to those people born in Ukraine or ethnic Ukrainians upon the requirement to deprive naturalized foreigners rights for Ukrainian citizenship if any crimes committed; a number of provisions concerning the Ukrainian language; "to offer preferential conditions for returning to

¹⁶ The Statute of the VO "Svoboda" approved by the 12th congress of the VO "Svoboda" on December 23, 2005 // Current archive of the VO "Svoboda"

the Motherland, for those ethnic Ukrainians who were forcedly deported or made to emigrate”; “return in to passports and birth certificates information concerning “nationality”; guarantee proportional representativeness of Ukrainians in all bodies of authority – not less than 78 %; 2) anti-communism: “to initiate public legal procedures against communism. To prohibit communist ideology as misanthropic, which caused incorrigible damage to the Ukrainian nation”; 3) anti-Russian: demand from Moscow an official apology and compensation for genocide of the Ukrainian nation, demand from Russia to return all people’s savings, withdraw troops out of the Crimea. Thus, in the new version were eliminated the provisions concerning the leading role of Ukraine in the region, Europe and world (Ukraine-centrism). On the contrary, in the program appeared the following characteristics: 1) appeal to historical memory with the aim to give positive narrative to some historical events, in particular Holodomor (what corresponded the line, chosen by President Yushchenko) and OUN-UPA; 2) anti-immigrant provisions, concerning shut off all channels of illegal immigration, conditions for deportation of illegal immigrants (what can be qualified as the result of cooperation with a number of anti-emigrant parties from Eastern European countries); 3) support to Ukrainian immigrants. On the other hand, the program omitted the issues of democracy, human rights and social protection. Herewith, we observe in it some left requirements: “check validity of privatization of all big enterprises and initiate re-privatization”, “provide constitutional right for housing to all Ukrainian families. To oblige construction monopolists to build social housing at reasonable prices”, to provide deportee status with all social guarantees to Ukrainians, who were expelled from the native land, provide people in regions, who suffered from any technology-related contaminations, a status, equal to that of Chernobyl fighters, provide OUN-UPA veterans with corresponding preferences and compensate everything lost over 15 years of independence. Final requirements have much in common with populist promises/requirements, though they are addressed to Ukrainians not all citizens. Besides, in the program there are anticorruption slogans: to eradicate corruption schemes of providing citizenship of Ukraine”, “to exterminate corruption schemes and stop appointing non-professionals on the leading positions”, “to bring to responsibility the organizers ... of corruption activity”.

Thus, the program of the party in the 2005 version is characterized by the foundations of nationalism, anti-communism and anti-Russian rhetoric. It comprises elements of emigrant requirements. At the same time it acquires the nature of left ideology, with significant elements of populism: social promises without economic grounding, appeal to justice, anti-corruption phraseology. It is difficult to position the program as to the issues of democracy and human rights as they are not represented in it at all.

The version of the program adopted by the 20th congress of the VO "Svoboda" on May 24, 2009¹⁷ is characterized by a significant growth in number of provisions/paragraphs in comparison with the previous version. It preserved and developed a number of crucial characteristics from the previous program: Ukrainian nationalism, anti-communism, anti-Russian nature, anti-emigrant ideas, support to Ukrainian migrants. Especially significant it was worked out and thus developed in the provisions concerning the restoration of historical justice while treating/interpreting historical events. If the previous version concentrated focus on the role and importance of the OUN-UPA, then the new version of the program appealed to the historical events in the Kyivska Rus. While assessing the events connected with the Soviet regime, the notion of "the genocide of the Ukrainian nation" was introduced and was formulated the appeal to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the UNO, Euro parliament, parliaments of other countries of the world to acknowledge the fact of the genocide of Ukrainians in the 20th century as a crime against humanity. Moreover a new requirement was articulated: "To develop and introduce state education programs "The truth about genocide of Ukrainians" and introduce a new education subject "The History of the Genocide of Ukrainians in the 20th century" in all education establishments". Significant attention is paid to the issues of European Ukraine-centrism and powerful state. In the program it is stated that European Ukraine-centrism must become a strategic course of the state, according to which Ukraine wishes to become not only a geographical, but also geopolitical center of Europe¹⁸. Together with the requirements to withdraw membership from the CIS, CES, EurAsEC, the GUAM organization is determined as an important geopolitical project. Besides, they define the scope of natural allies – countries of the Baltic-Black Sea geopolitical axis. For the first time ever, the idea of joining the NATO is contemplating on the conditions favorable for Ukraine and upon conditions of strict guarantees and precise terms¹⁹. Significant attention is paid to the issues of reformation and development of the Armed Force of Ukraine and Navy forces of Ukraine, withdrawal of Russian military bases from the Ukrainian territory. Another characteristic feature became a great block of requirement towards authority and society. In particular they regularized a demand/requirement: to transform Ukraine into a presidential republic, increase the significance of local self-administrations, abolishment of deputy immunity, introduction of a proportional electoral system with open lists, to reduce the term for the President's position, terms of the parliament and local councils, introduce new three-level system of administrative-territorial formation of Ukraine and so on. In the political bloc attention is drawn to the requirements to introduce practice of direct people-power in territorial communities – referendums, plebiscites, general meetings. In this context we may observe the requirements to introduce the mechanism of people's veto

¹⁷ The Statute of the VO "Svoboda" approved by the 20th congress of the VO "Svoboda" on May 24, 2009 // State, power and civil society in the documents of political parties of Ukraine (late 1980s – first part of 2011). – K.: IPiEND im. I. F. Kurasa NAN Ukrainy, 2011. – P. 183-191.

¹⁸ Ibid. – P.188.

¹⁹ Ibid. – P.189.

as to the decisions taken by local self-administrations and providing the right for territorial communities to recall deputies of local councils, judges, local, judges and introduce the right to vote of no confidence in the head of the executive committee, land surveyors and the head of the department of internal affairs by means of plebiscite. The social context of the previous program was a bit developed by some requirements concerning an increase or provision of high living standards which must be guaranteed by the state.

Therefore, the party's program in the version of 2009 preserved previous characteristics of Ukrainian nationalism, anti-communism, anti-Russian rhetoric, elements of emigrant requirements as well as profound elements of populism: social promises without economic grounding, appeal to justice, requirements for direct democracy, which are characteristics of left political forces. Right-wing requirements are more clearly outlined in the program: strong army, nation, order. It is still difficult to position the program as to the issues of democracy and human rights as they are not represented in it at all.

The current program of the VO "Svoboda", published on the party site²⁰, was adopted with changes and amendments at the 38th congress on September 2017. It presupposes party's assessment of tasks, taking into account annexation of the Crimea by Russia and the war on the territory of some districts in Donets and Luhansk regions. The program mainly specifies or develops all already mentioned provisions from the analyzed programs. Among new points attention is attracted by paragraph 1.10 concerning prohibition of activity of anti-Ukrainian political parties and public organizations and creation in the Criminal Code of Ukraine an individual chapter "Crimes against the Ukrainian Nation". The abovementioned norm, on conditions that there are no strict indicators how to define "anti-Ukrainian activity", may become a powerful instrument in the hands of authority in struggle with critics/opponents to the official national paradigm, both among political parties and in the civil society. Among the number of new more tough requirements it is necessary to mention paragraph 1.27 concerning the requirement to preserve unitary character of the state, render impossible any claims for autonomy, "special status" or "special order of self-administration". Though, these norms can be explained by formalization of the party's position as to implementation of Minsk agreements as to the special status of currently occupied territories of Donbas, their interpretation in future may put into question the policy of decentralization. With further development of the ideas of Ukraine-centrism there is certain correction concerning omitting the importance of the GUAM construction and additional emphasis on the advantages of the Baltic-Black Sea Alliance, construction of which becomes predominant in the foreign policy vision of the party. As the current version of the program comprises the most complete understanding of the party construction of economic nationalism and social justice, let's study them more precisely. In the sphere of economic policy the state is obliged to: perform deoligarchisation of the national

²⁰ The program of defense of Ukrainians (current version). – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: https://svoboda.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PZU_actual_text_1-44.pdf

economy and liquidate private monopolies and cartels; adopt a complex of measures concerning return of capitals from offshores; prohibit privatization of strategic enterprises and return to the state those previously privatized; check validity of privatization of great enterprises, up to returning into the state ownership those enterprises whose owners did not perform their social, investment and other obligations; take control over natural monopolies; provide control over the bank sphere; legislatively restrict extortionate interests on bank credits; do not permit privatization of land and so on. In the sphere of social justice: to liquidate social gap between rich and poor; provide small and medium business with available and reasonable credits; to bring the cost of living into compliance with the real needs; abolish unfair pension reform and so on. A general conclusion of the current program in the last version will justify the assessment of the previous as populist.

Evaluation of the party on the basis of its program always evoke a question as to the extent the publicly declared provisions characterize the whole party in general. Are there in the party any groups with distinctive positions/approaches? According to the evaluation of former SNPU members in the party at the end of its continuation rather sensitive were relations between the group of the party members around A. Parubii and around O. Tiahnybok. The first group was characterized as more ideological and less aimed at "earning money for the party". Distinctive approaches as to evaluation of the party activity were vividly represented in the reaction as to O. Tiahnybok's speech in the party "Svoboda" on July 17, 2004 at Yavoryna mountain²¹. The so-called group of A. Parubii treated the speech and the outcomes rather negatively. On the other hand, O. Tiahnybok justified viability of his own formulations for further growth of the party. It should be mentioned that in January 2005 A. Parubii left the party. The same was done by 6 out of 18 members of the Political Council. In further activity of the party at the public level we practically do not have evidence as to the existence in the party any other distinctive approaches. To some extent, from this generally homogeneous information, fall out the examples of 2012-2013. At that time in public speeches of the VO "Svoboda" representatives we can find different messages. In the article published by I. Farion in the internet it goes that "an organic hyperbolic anti-thesis friend-or-foe, i.e. Ukrainian-Jew, German, moskal becomes a means of assertion of a corresponding ideologeme, what is a successful and influential keen-public device. Such anti-thesis has not only political, ethically-upright, but existential character, as an oppositional structure ""friend-or-foe" (motherland-foreign country) is one of the deepest archetypes, inherent to kin consciousness"²². In September 2013 people's deputy

²¹ In his speech O. Tiahnybok stated: "The enemy came and took Ukraine. But they were not scared and now we should not be scared as well, they took up arms and went into woods they got prepared and fought against moskals, fought against Germans, fought with Jews and other evil, which wanted to take Ukrainian State from us". The prosecutor's office in Ivano-Frankivsk region opened an occurrence against Tiahnybok charging him with ethnic agitation. But on March 31, 2005 he was finally freed from accusations after several trials. However, that speech cost O. Tiahnybok a place in the parliamentary faction "Our Ukraine". See: Shekhovtsov A. VO "Svoboda": the problem of legitimacy in fight for power. – P. 186-187. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: uamoderna.com/images/archive/2013-20/shekhovtsov.pdf.

²² Farion I. Words as witnesses of truth. Linguistic expertise of ethnonyms "Jews" and "moskal" in the context of a meeting speech. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: www.freewebs.com/propovid/dopysy/farion.htm

from VO “Svoboda” A. Illienko stated “We always repeated that Ukraine is a part of Europe and European civilization. We have never been against Europe. We are a pro-European party. First of all, we are a pro-Ukrainian party. But our key thesis in foreign relation policy is European Ukraine-centrism”²³. Though, the article by I. Farion under such title was first published in 2004 in the magazine “Universum”, the version we cited is proclaimed by I. Farion being a people’s deputy and refers to 2012-2014. Thus, both messages refer to almost the same period. However, a bit distinctive cited assessments do not give us grounds to state that the VO “Svoboda” in the ideological scope allows/allowed relatively wide range of assessments and interpretations or that is possible to speak of distinctive groups inside the party, which could be roughly qualified as moderate and radical. The majority of party members we talked to, state, that there have not been any significant differences in interpreting the declared provisions of the program. Different interpretations predominantly appear due to peculiar features of the political moment and bear tactical character. The stress on a more radical evaluation or less tough was determined by specific circumstances and did not represent an inner-party discussion.

On the other hand, party representatives remark that since 2006 in the party has appeared a division into “pragmatists/businessmen” and “ideological people”. The first group justified the necessity to correct the behavior of party organizations, different levels of departure from program goals or value-based provisions by need to get funding from business. Payment for sponsors’ funding had to be: inclusion of businessmen into the party, voting for “ambiguous issues” in local bodies of authority, absence of public party reaction to questionable actions of the government and so on. As a rule, within the party such “compulsory pragmatism” in exchange for money was explained by necessity to provide financial support to the party members in other regions. Another group predominantly consisted of ordinary members and middle-ranking leaders as in particular they had to agree on such requirements, supporting them by their votes or silence and in this way legitimize “pragmatic” activity of the party leaders, i.e. they had to “make a deal with a devil”. The authority of pragmatists in the life of the party, especially in the questions of personnel and party decisions all the time was predominant. At the same time functioning of these two groups was no evidence for a competition for power in the party, as the representatives of both groups acknowledge the leading position of O. Tiahnybok and do not cast doubt on it.

Determination of the party leaders of the VO “Svoboda” on “pragmatic” behavior in exchange for money/services with silent agreement, in fact consent of the party members, calls into doubts a widespread statement concerning the ideological character of the party. Ideological nature is really can be found in the program document, public speeches of the party representatives, however constant “cooperation” with sponsors puts on the agenda a number

²³ Illienko Andrii: The Party of Regions is now similar to the “Our Ukraine” in the days of V. Yushchenko // Hlavkom. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://glavkom.ua/interviews/122132-andrij-illijenko-partia-regioniv-zaraz-nagaduje-“nashu-ukrainu”-chasiv-jushchenka.html>

of questions: 1) is there an edge and where is it when the foundations/values of Ukrainian nationalism come into contradiction with a chance to get profit? 2) whether the desire to get financial and other support and a possibility of personal gain of individual representatives of the party allows us state that ideological values remain the characteristic feature of the party and its members, but do not serve as a kind of disguise?

Validity/reasonableness of the abovementioned questions is justified by the results of deputies' from the VO "Svoboda" activity in regional, city councils in a number of regions and activity of the party representatives at the highest state positions after the Revolution of Dignity. A high level of expectations that the party representatives could radically change the situation, establish such expected order, that they personally would become a model of morality in politics have not withstood the test of power. The practice showed that a high level of patriotism does not always correspond with professionalism and struggle against corruption, moreover as to a number of the party representatives there were multiple charges of unlawful enrichment²⁴. By all means, this topic is of great significance for all Ukrainian politics and it requires special research and studies which could form foundations for specific conclusions as to the ideological level of the VO "Svoboda". But "unpleasant after-taste" remained and was represented not only in a considerable lowering of the party and its candidates rating in September 2014 in comparison with January of the same year, but also in doubts as to the ideological level of the party.

Therefore, we may conclude that the program of the VO "Svoboda" is nationalistic, combining characteristic inherent to left-wing parties in economy and right-wing parties in the questions of army, nation. In this context, we assume that it not correct to position the VO "Svoboda" as a right-wing party. It is populist and does not presuppose any provisions concerning defense for rights of citizens and democracy, tending to authoritarian techniques of state governing.

²⁴ Fesenko: There are many accusations against the Prosecutor General's Office headed by Makhnitskyi. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://for-ua.com/article/1038236>; From radicalism to moderateness: what is the secret of the "Svoboda" failure. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://www.dw.com/uk/від-радикалізму-до-поміркованості-у-чому-секрет-провалу-свободи/a-18027849>; What will 15 former Prosecutor Generals be remembered for. – [Electronic resource]. – Access mode: <https://ua.112.ua/mnenie/chym-zapamiataysia-15-poperednich-kerivnykiv-hpu-311005.html>