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DEVELOPMENT OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE POST-SOVIET UKRAINE

ABSTRACT

Analysis of the main stages of transformation among the political opposition and its impact on the political process in Ukraine (1991–2012 years) according to the institutional approach reveals the phenomenon of political opposition, the generalization of its main characteristics. Examined the theoretical approaches to the classification of political opposition.

Key words

opposition, party system, types of political opposition

1. Formulation of research problems

The existence of political opposition in Ukraine is one of the key foundations of a democratic political system, the key to its stability. But, in the process of evolution it had trouble with the formation and activities of the opposition in the transitional post-totalitarian states. They have no clear understanding of the place and role of the political opposition, its function in the development of state and society. Research of the transformation process of opposition groups in a responsible opposition, its effect on the solution and resolve political conflicts, social studies framework; characteristic of types estimation made by the opposition claims is a priority for the Ukrainian political science.

2. The extent of the problem

Determining the nature, types and functions of the political opposition are reflected in the writings of prominent Western scholars – R. Dahl, G. Sartori, J. Linz, R. Panneta etc. and Ukrainian scientists, including S. Ryabov, V. Yakushik, I. Pavlenko, U. Kiriyyenko, M. Mikhalchenko, P. Tkachuk consider

the opposition in terms of the existence of democracy in the country, as a reaction, the controlling mechanism of the authorities.

The aim of the article is research of opposition stages institute, its formation and development, as part of the political process in Ukraine.

The process of institutionalization of the opposition ended in Western Europe since the second half of the nineteenth century. The liberal democratic idea of the political opposition as an integral element of the process of national will is also required as the power and the parliamentary majority.¹ First there is the phenomenon of political opposition in the English Parliament in 1826 as a group of MPs expressing official disapproval of the decisions and actions of the ruling majority. The opposition was seen as a part of the creation of government, and legal normalization of its activity, a legal prerequisite for the rotation of political power, a means of limiting the majority of its absolute impossibility.

As we can see, the political opposition is initially formed as an institution to represent and defend the interests of citizens, which is expressed predominantly in the aggregate organizational forms, does not participate in the formation of higher executive authorities, provides a systematic critique of the regime, has its own principles and basic provisions advocated by all possible means, an forms alternative to declared government program of social development.²

R. Dahl characterizes the opposition as an expression of competitive political regime. The existence of opposition, competition or competition between the government and its opponents, he considers an important aspect of social democracy and the evolution political system.³

Ukrainian researcher S. Ryabov identifies at least three main components of the concept of opposition: 1) the state in which turns political power as a result of political defeat, being in the minority, or indeed outside the “field” influential political interaction; 2) political competition, the battle of the political force against another tantamount rival; 3) disagreement with government policy of the ruling political party, its criticism, objections and propose alternatives.⁴

¹ І. Павленко, *Опозиція: права та повноваження*, “Людина і політика” 2002, No. 4, p. 8.

² С.С. Бондар, *Критерії опозиційності в політичній системі України*, “Вісник Ужгородського національного університету. Серія: Філософія. Соціологія. Політологія” 2007, No. 7–8, p. 344.

³ Р. Даль, *Поліархія. Участь у політичному житті та опозиція* [пер. з англ. О.Д. Білогорського], Х.: Каравела, 2002, p. 18.

⁴ С. Рябов, *Опозиція як джерело альтернативної політики*, “Вибори та демократія” 2005, No. 4, p. 2.

M. Yakushik defines the political opposition as a complex of political forces (not only institutionalized, well-structured, legalized, but also amorphous) which are in the opposition to the forces that control the political power.⁵ The definitions of “political opposition” describing it as opposite to the power position of political power. In the general perception opposition is defined as a rejection of the political course pursued by the current government. In science there are several approaches to the definition of the phenomenon of opposition.

According to the above allegations, the political opposition is an institution of the political system, which includes organized political forces that do not approve of the program and activities of the current government, offer alternative solutions and implement them for seeking to replace imperious command. Institutionalism also defines how the opposition factions or political parties do not support a policy of the majority. Such opposition which is represented in a Parliament is the parliamentary opposition, and when it operates outside the parliament, it acquires the status of political opposition. Actually, the type of opposition depends also on the political field which it occupies. We believe this because the main element of institutional structures acts opposition parties which acquire the status of opposition or ruling during the competition for power through elections. For optimal operation of mechanism of representation and coordination of public interest is to create a strong party system with several leading political parties, and several parties, companions, instead of existing in Ukraine polarized quasi parties. The objective of the opposition comes to power or influences on it, so the full functioning of the opposition is only possible under conditions of representative activities.

Also note that the phenomenon of opposition in science is considered in three main activities: 1) identified with the political opposition parliamentary; 2) political opposition includes activities organized political and social forces; 3) the political opposition only covers the activities of political forces. Speaking on the typology of political opposition, we note that the process of its creation in modern Ukraine is on the way its institutionalization. So, you should certainly mention the theoretical work of Western scholars in this field.

In political science it is also allocated the regime and civil political opposition. The first is part of policy-making; it is an element of power, but in opposition to

⁵ В.М. Якушик, Деякі теоретичні засади аналізу політико-правового статусу політичної опозиції, Політична опозиція: теорія та історія, світовий досвід та українська практика, К.: Навч.метод. каб. вищ. освіти Міністерства освіти і науки України 1996, р. 178.

it. It might be opposition within the political faction that is part of the ruling majority. The second type of opposition – civil is a part of civil society. Civilian opposition – is trade unions, organizational and other associations that can affect a portion of the electorate.

Political opposition is impossible without the existence of democratic reforms, the development of a multiparty system. Over 20 years of statehood Ukrainian party system broke several stages of their own development, which can be structured as follows:

- 1989–1991 – the loss of the Communist Party dominance, the emergence of social and political associations on the basis of classical political ideologies;
- 1991–1994 – the process of joining of parties in the political system of Ukraine;
- 1996–1999 – further atomization of the party system. A political party in the political process as devoid of management decisions and their impact on the formation of state policy is minimized;
- 1999–2004 – strengthening the role of political parties in the presidential elections of 1999 and 2004 Organization of the opposition mass protests concerning the actions of the government (“Ukraine without Kuchma”, Orange Revolution);
- 2005–2009 – further institutionalization of the party system, increased conflict in the struggle for power between state authorities;
- 2010–2012 – the process of uniting around the basic ideas of democracy, the main opposition parties, the struggle with the existing political regime by democratic values.

Having examined the stages of the party system, pay attention to the fact of the processes of perestroika (rebuilding) in the Soviet Union in the late 80s of the XX century, led to fundamental changes in the political system. A key event in this way was the election of people’s deputies of the USSR in 1989. The Soviet system, which is fundamentally perceived ideas of parliamentarism, the first time allowed some elements of free and competitive elections. Logic of rapid transformation led to the law on elections to the Supreme Soviet of USSR on October 27, 1989 that was more democratic than the previous union (in particular, was not provided for direct election of deputies of the NGOs, was fixed principle of compulsory alternatives, was “dismantled system” that filtered “citizen” meeting to approve candidates. One should mention the political configuration of the first Ukrainian parliament. In the early days of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine it was established parliamentary majority, which included members of

the Communist Party (“Group 239”), and opposition (parliamentary association “National Council”). At the end of the parliament appeared political groups that became the prototype of the upcoming parliamentary factions. In addition, working, regional group members have united by profession, an industry basis, with any group in collaboration with foreign countries.

The importance of the relationship of parties and state certified speech on January 28, 1992 at the session of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the first President of independent Ukraine (Leonid Kravchuk) was elected. In his speech, much attention was paid to the parties stood thus only “Rukh” (“Movement”) that could, according to the President’s words, “to lead all progressive forces and parties in the name of Ukraine”.⁶ But the third nationwide “Rukh” meetings rejected the proposal Kravchuk and headed the opposition to power. After a nationwide referendum and presidential elections proved that the targets set on which blocked the main political forces and the president’s own policy coincided. Began new stage of Ukrainian multi that M. Tomenko defined as a “loyal state”.⁷ This phase led opposition divisions under its inception. Much of the party structures, social and political organizations during the presidential elections were in opposition to Kravchuk from different social and an economic situation that had to support the President and the government. Created Congress of the national – democratic forces and national – radical bloc theoretically and practically formulated thesis: “Support for a popularly elected President of Ukraine – is to support the development of an independent state”, respectively: “The opposition to the President – is the destruction of an independent state”.

The policies were extreme left and extreme right-wing forces in open opposition to government. Most leftist parties formed from the remnants of the old Communist Party. In October 1991, part of the banned Communist Party had formed the Socialist Party of Ukraine (SPU). In April 1992 the Socialist Party, the Peasant Party and several other groups have formed a coalition of pro-“Labor Ukraine”. June 19, 1993 illegally resumed SPU was headed by the former secretary of central Committee Petro Symonenko. Right opposition parties were nationalistic, which accused the government of being too acquiescent to Russia and declared the fight against “Moscow” forces (Ukrainian Republican Party,

⁶ *Історія українських виборів (1990 р., 1994 р., 1998 р.)*, http://www.parlament.org.ua/index.php?action=publication&id=8&ar_id=11&iar_id=316&as=2.

⁷ М. Томенко, *Українська перспектива: історико-політологічні підстави сучасної державної стратегії*, К.: Фонд “Українська перспектива” 1995, Вип. 2, р. 72.

the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, Ukrainian Conservative Republican Party). March 27, 1994 it held the first elections in independent Ukraine. One of the important features of the elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 2nd convocation on a democratic basis was bringing them closer to the standards of a true multiparty system. Officially, during the election campaign in 1994 the candidates were registered from 28 political parties. Nationwide campaign conducted two largest parties of that time – the Ukrainian political forces (the CPU) and the People’s Movement of Ukraine. However, half of the candidates were still non-partisan. Apparently frustrated democratic transition in late 80’s – early 90’s of XX century prompted many prospective members without focusing voters on their political sympathies.

In spring, 1994 among the elected members there were the representatives of the Communist Party of Ukraine, People’s Movement of Ukraine, the Peasant Party of Ukraine, the Socialist Party of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Republican Party, the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists, the Christian-Democratic Party of Ukraine, Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine, the Democratic Party of Ukraine, Party of Labour Social Democratic party of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Conservative Republican party, the Civic Congress of Ukraine.

In our opinion, the period from 1991 to 1994 years should be considered as the birth of the political opposition in Ukraine since the emergence of such organizations as the “People’s Movement of Ukraine for Perestroika (Rebuilding)” and further processing of the movement into a political party “People’s Movement of Ukraine” marked the beginning of the emergence of political opposition in Ukraine.

On the basis of this political force arose many national-democratic parties (Ukrainian Republican Party, Democratic Party of Ukraine, Labour Party, Social-Democratic Party of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Conservative Republican Party, the Christian Democratic Party of Ukraine, Party of Democratic Revival of Ukraine, Civic Congress of Ukraine) that caused the beginning of pluralism and democratization.

So, in the Ukraine early 90s of XX century conceived the new political elite, as a result of a compromise of the old party and administrative nomenclature and of a part of national – democratic opposition. However, due to the lack of a clear political line Rukh (The Movement) and “New Ukraine”, which declared cooperation with the President and the government, and their opposition to them have caused a serious problem identification through which the democrats and the opposition were too little to rapidly target in Ukrainian politics mainstream of democratic and market reforms.

In 1996, the Constitution of Ukraine was adopted in the development of which opposition parties were involved. It was one of the first tangible examples of their influence on the government in making the basic law of the state (questions concerning the value of legislative and executive powers, the status of Russian state symbols etc.). Another example of decisive action in relation to power is opposition protest the early 2000s. “Ukraine without Kuchma” demanding the resignation of the President Leonid Kuchma in light of the “cassette scandal”. Then the opposition declared itself as a force capable of actually influence to the government by organizing large-scale protests.

At the beginning of 2006 force amendments have entered into the Constitution of Ukraine. This innovation has led a new balance of political forces in the Parliament. The political parties gained the great weight under the new rules, the initiative in forming the government by joining in a parliamentary coalition.

During 2005–2011 there were in Ukraine significant changes in the constitutional and legal framework of the state, and the political party system and in whole political system of the state. These changes, on the one hand, were the result of activities of the opposition forces and, on the other hand, influenced their actions and determined the configuration of the opposition in general.

In terms of criteria for the opposition, the most important role was played by amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine on December 12th, 2004 and returned to the Constitution of 1996. According to the Constitutional Court decision in September, 2010 during this period before the entry into force of amendments to the Constitution in its entirety, the opposition continued to operate with the criterion based on the treatment of Presidential policy of Ukraine. After the 2006 parliamentary elections in Ukraine used typical for most European countries criterion for determining the parliamentary opposition on the grounds that did not join the majority coalition. However, during this period it kept the existence of opposition to the President of Ukraine, which remained significant authority to determine the policy of the state and the impact on the Government of Ukraine.⁸

After the presidential elections of 2010, Restoration of the Constitution of 1996 and the empowering of President Viktor Yanukovych, the opposition could again be determined by the attitude to the head of state. From 2006 to 2010 the balance of the leading political forces against “government-opposition”

⁸ С.Г. Конончук, *Парламентська опозиція в Україні: модель та провадження: Дослідження проблеми*, С.Г. Конончук, О.А. Ярош (eds.), К.: Український незалежний центр політичних досліджень 2006, р. 3.

has changed. In Parliament of two callings' coalitions were established in five different formats (coalition of democratic forces – Yulia Tymoshenko's Bloc “Our Ukraine” and the Socialist Party of Ukraine (2006), the anti-crisis coalition (the Party of Regions), the Socialist Party of Ukraine and the Communist Party of Ukraine (2006–2007), a short time was called the Coalition of national Unity, a coalition of democratic forces – Yulia Tymoshenko's Bloc and “Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defense” (2007–2008), a coalition of national development, stability and order (a coalition of Yulia Tymoshenko's Bloc), “Our Ukraine – People's Self-Defense” and Lytvyn's Bloc (2008–2010), Stability and Reforms coalition – a coalition of the Party of Regions, the Communist party, the Bloc of Lytvyn and individual MPs (since 2010).

According to our analysis it was proved the most stable coalition with the Party of Regions. Instead of the coalition, which included the YTB (Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc and the blocs on the basis of “Our Ukraine” were unstable. The main cause of instability was a conflict between President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who predetermined mutual opposition (overtly or covertly) of two political parties in power. At the same should be said about the presence of factors that affect the existence of opposition parties. Among them the inner struggle for leadership or personal factor; the weakness of the ideological program; accountability of the majority party to the financial-industrial groups or weak financial capacity, poor enforcement of the campaign promises, the lack of effective methods to influence on the President, the executive and others. The existence of different reasons for opposition, combined with the features mentioned parties and the party system in Ukraine, offers opportunities for activities of different oppositions, both in Parliament and outside.

Configuration of such oppositions may be different. In particular, there may be ideologically diverse coalition. Under these conditions, the opposition does not depend on ideological factors as between opposition and pro-government forces from different ideological standpoints may consist of ad hoc alliances caused a temporary coincidence of tactical objectives and business or political interests. This may explain the existence in Ukraine such phenomena as “selective”, “tactical”, “personal”, “constructive” opposition, in different periods they were used to characterize the political behavior of certain political forces.⁹

⁹ *Опозиція в Україні: стан і умови діяльності, відносини з владою, перспективи їх нормалізації*, Інформаційно-аналітичні матеріали до Круглого столу на тему “Опозиція і влада в Україні: чи є шанс на подолання конфронтації?”, Центр Разумкова, 2011, <http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/index.php>.

At the same time, Ukraine's parliamentary elections in October 2012 there was massive rigging of elections that allowed the three parties [the All-Ukrainian association "Motherland" ("Batktivshchyna"), "Front of Changes", VO "Svoboda" (Nation Union "Freedom") and party of V. Klitschko] gain significant representation in the Supreme Rada. The situation in the Ukrainian opposition in general, like the Russian state, with the significant difference that Ukrainian is still able to change its position, and the idea of a common struggle for fair elections and change of government in a democratic manner creates a substantial basis for the association and shall more realistic character.

In contrast to the 2004 and 2010, when the "orange forces" had no common platform or ideas for unification, the current opposition has developed an action plan for the phased elimination of the current regime from power and ensuring democratic procedure:

- Unite around the basic ideas of democracy;
- Joint development of action programs and bills in case of winning the election ("On the mechanism of impeachment of the President", "On protection of the Ukrainian language", etc.);
- Coordination in the campaign and the election of political forces "Batktivshchyna", "Front of Changes" and VO "Svoboda" their staffs and candidates;
- Nominating a single candidate from the "united opposition" to seat constituencies;
- Joint campaign;
- Supervise the voting and counting of votes;
- Joint fixing violations at the elections, giving of evidential material to relevant organs of control and the world community.

3. Summary

Summing up, repeating the thesis that the Ukrainian political opposition passing phase nucleation, is at the stage of development characterized by instability and non linearity of the process. In the middle of the opposition there are various factors that hinder the unification of the opposition forces – a single point of control over the decisions and actions of public authorities. Traditionally prevent unite opposition parties in Ukraine excessive leadership ambitions of their leaders, a tough political battle on the joint electoral field, the desire to control the financial resources of the parties influence the oligarchic groups pressure on opposition leaders and some groups in the middle of parties,

political irresponsibility and populism in less difference in ideology, political and cultural values.

Thus, the transformation of the political opposition in a responsible, accomplished political structure is only beginning to gain its momentum. Whose mission is to create a constructive political criticism, providing an alternative to power solutions, opening dialogue of society and government through the opposition. The transition of political force in opposition should not be seen as a political defeat, but as the ability and opportunity to control the authorities, thus providing the inevitability of democratic processes in our country.