

Valeriia Pokliatska

**UNITED STATES IMAGE IN POST-SOVIET UKRAINE:
SOVIET HERITAGE AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN CURRENT POLITICS
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF ORANGE REVOLUTION 2004)**

One of the main components of Soviet foreign policy and ideology was the perception of the U.S. as the main "Enemy". This had a great impact on the forming of a stable negative image of this country in minds of the Ukrainians and other Soviet nations. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the beginning of transition to democracy, image of the USA radically changed. But as it occurred in 2004 during the Orange Revolution "Soviet heritage" of negative attitude towards the USA is still presented and actively used by pro-Russian forces.

Key words: *Soviet heritage, Soviet political stereotypes, ideology, image of the "Enemy", Orange Revolution.*

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the former Soviet republics the process of democratic transition from an authoritarian to democratic political regime had begun. However, in some countries, this process had been delayed and faced with a lot of problems and threats. One of the problems that hamper Ukraine's fast, quiet and qualitative transition to a Western-style democracy is the dominance of the Soviet political stereotypes in the minds of many Ukrainian citizens. This was actively used by pro-Russian political forces: their representatives appealed to Soviet myths in order to increase the support of their own electorate and to manipulate the mass consciousness. One of these myths is the negative image of the United States, which today still serves for the benefit of some politicians.

The purpose of this paper is to generalize the stereotypes remaining of the Soviet time as well as attitudes towards the United States in independent Ukraine on the example of attitudes towards America during the events of the Orange Revolution and right after it.

Prior to describe the main dimensions of the post-Soviet image of the USA, it is necessary to pay attention to some features of the "Soviet heritage".

For a long time Ukraine was one of the republics of the Soviet Union dominated by only one political party — Communist Party. The political line and behavior, which this party followed — was "the only possible one, correct and irrefutable". The Soviet Union was a totalitarian state, where the way of organizing social life was characterized by comprehensive control by the government over the society and the individual, the whole social system was subjected to the collective goals and official ideology. Consequently, ideology played a key role in the functioning of a totalitarian society, permeating all aspects of its life. Individual's own feelings and thoughts were almost completely

replaced by official ideology. Ideology and politics in the USSR as a totalitarian state were interdependent. Ideology determined the foreign and domestic political life, and government policy in its turn was reflected in the official ideology. The main purpose was to substantiate the political decisions and actions of the government, to force the support of the government. To perform these tasks it was necessary to create and disseminate the political myths, which become the basis for the formation of certain stereotypes.

According to the definition in the glossary of political psychology, 'stereotype' is "a standardized, schematic, simplified and flattened, usually brightly emotionally charged image of any socio-political object (phenomenon, process), which has a high stability and fix in itself only some of its features, which are sometimes insignificant"¹. Stereotypes are formed and propagated in the minds of citizens in the conditions of absence of personal experience, the lack of information. Characteristic features of stereotypes are their emotional coloring and stability. The last feature explains why even after more than twenty years since the collapse of the USSR, many people still support the Soviet cultural traditions, despite the large amount of information directed against the Soviet Union.

We can name the following consequences of the long-term dominance of the Communist regime in Ukraine: the conservation of the Soviet political stereotypes in the minds of many citizens; the political and civic apathy; fairly easy public obedience to the authorities; nostalgia for the Soviet past among a certain segment of the Ukrainian population.

¹ Глосарій по політичеській психології, Москва 1996, [http://vocabulary.ru/dictionary/8/word/stereotip, доступ: 11.07.2014].

Perhaps, one of the most important problems in independent Ukraine is a large number of “Soviet” identity carriers among Russian-speaking population. This is confirmed by the opinion polls, which were conducted by leading Ukrainian analytical centers — Olexander Razumkov Ukrainian Centre for Economic and Political Studies (the Razumkov Centre) and the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of Ukraine.

For example, in 2006–2007 the Razumkov Centre conducted a sociological survey where the central question was: “Which cultural tradition do you belong to?”. In May 2006 16.4 % of the respondents identified themselves with the Soviet culture, and 11.3 % — with Russian one. We have to mention that as Russia declared itself as a successor to the Soviet Union — some people are equating “Russian” with “Soviet”. Results of a similar poll in June 2007 illustrated the following figures: 19.4 % related themselves with the Soviet culture, 10.1 % — with Russian one. Thus, the number of supporters of the Soviet cultural tradition increased by 3 %, while Russian — decreased by 1.2 %².

As part of sociological monitoring “The Ukrainian Society”, conducted by the Institute of Sociology of NAS of Ukraine, the following question was asked: “Please select from the list of the political currents (movements) the one which is the closest to you”. Among proposed answers were: Communist, Socialist, Liberal, Social-Democratic, Nationalist, the other, none at all, etc. Thus, in 1992 supporters of the Communist current were 2.9 %; in 1998 — 21.9 %; in 2004 — 14.4 %, in 2013 — 11.3 %. At the same time, the Socialist current was selected in 1992 — by 5.2 %; in 1998 — by 5.6 %, in 2004 — by 11.1 %; in 2013 — by 6.3 %. These currents gained the highest percentage of adherents, not including replies: “yet not fully defined its position”, “I do not understand these currents in general”³.

Thus, we can say that the Soviet legacy still persists in modern Ukraine, and finds its expression in the minds of a large number of citizens. This situation changed only with the start of Russian aggression on the East of Ukraine.

There were two basic components of the Soviet ideology, which played an important role: the image of the “Enemy” and “Friend”. Consciousness of any society, group, and organization has inherent division of the world around them into two main groups: “We” and “They”. The image of the “Other” is a necessary component for the consolidation of society and its self-identification. In the Soviet

official ideology the image of the “Other” was mostly identified with the “Enemy”, so the government and Soviet propagandists paid a lot of attention to the explanation and spread of this component of the Soviet ideology.

First, we have to take into account that the Soviet Union was an artificial state formation, in which representatives of many nations were united. In order to make them feel citizens of the unified state with equal rights and common background, it was necessary to constantly promote the idea of friendship and fraternity between nations. At the same time it was important to emphasize the superiority of Russian people, language, traditions and more. The main aim was to declare the creation of a new — unified Soviet — nation. The image of the “Enemy” was one of the instruments to reinforce the consolidation of the Soviet society.

As we’ve already mentioned above — the Soviet Union was a totalitarian state. The idea of “personal happiness” disappeared in front of the idea of “common bright future”. According to the Marxist-Leninist conception of historical development, “bright future” was associated with the establishment of the Communist regime in all countries. From the beginning of the Soviet Union, the capitalist countries were proclaimed as the main foreign enemy. After the World War II by virtue of its economic development the USA became their leader, therefore this country was declared as the main foreign enemy of the Soviet Union.

Therefore, we can argue that one of the main components of the Soviet foreign policy and ideology was the perception of the U.S. as the main “Enemy”. This image was implemented in the Soviet media, cartoons and posters, movies, literature, books, songs, tales etc. The U.S. was represented as the “Stranger”, “Aggressor”, “Oppressor”, and “Invader”. The following typical expressions were used towards the United States: the “American invaders”, “aggressive imperialist circles”, “gendarmes”, “the instigators of war”, etc. They were accused of deploying arms race. A special part of the negative image of the U.S. was the concentration of the attention of the Soviet people on the coverage of the social and economic problems, such as low standard of living of most Americans, poverty, human rights violations.

This situation continued until the mid-1980s, when Mykhailo Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. His name is linked to such a period of the Soviet history as “Perestroika”, which was characterized by dramatic changes of basic vectors of Soviet domestic and foreign policy. The Soviet authorities declared the possibility of the peaceful coexistence of capitalist and socialist worlds. In addition, they stressed the necessity of certain borrowings from experience of the capitalist countries, including the area of the market economy.

² Sotsiologicheskiy opyt Olexandra Razumkova [http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/socpolls.php, dostep: 10.07.2014].

³ Ukrainske suspilstvo 1992–2013. Stan ta dynamika zmin. Sotsiologichniy monitorynh, V. Vorona, M. Shulha (red.), Kyiv 2013.

In these conditions, the image of the United States gradually began to change from the “Enemy” towards a potential “Partner”.

In 1991 the Soviet Union ceased to exist and Ukraine declared its independence. One of the first and main tasks of the newly formed state was to determine the foreign policy orientations. In the July 2, 1993 Resolution of the Supreme Council of Ukraine “On the Key Directions of the Foreign Policy of Ukraine” it was noted that a defining feature of Ukraine’s foreign policy is to establish “relations of political and military partnership, mutually beneficial economic cooperation and broad cultural, scientific, humanitarian ties” with the Western countries, especially with the United States⁴.

Thus, officially, at the state level, in independent Ukraine the cooperation with the U.S. in all possible areas was announced as one of the leading areas of foreign policy. The negotiations between Ukraine and NATO started. Majority of Ukrainians associate the United States with the North Atlantic Treaty. Relations between Ukraine and NATO had been formally established in 1991, when Ukraine joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. In 1994, Ukraine joined the program “Partnership for Peace”. Over the next decade the systematic meetings, intensive dialogue between the two partners continued.

However, as it was vivid during the Orange Revolution in 2004, Soviet stereotypes of negative attitude towards the United States still exist in Ukraine and they were actively used by some political forces for their own purposes.

Particularly, anti-American rhetoric was actively used by the representatives of leftist political forces — namely Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU) and others. Clearly anti-American policy was present in the election programs of these parties. With the purpose to attract the attention of their followers, they used the ideological clichés, widespread in the days of the Soviet Union, such as “NATO — aggressive block”, “politics of imperialist globalization”, “affirmation of hegemony”, “armed aggression”, “redrawing of borders”, “neo-colonialists”. In the program of the Communist Party special attention was paid to the U.S. foreign policy and its “basic techniques”: “inciting nationalism”, “provocation of the ‘democratic’”, “velvet”, “color” revolutions”, “the establishing of the puppet regimes in the sovereign states” etc^{5,6}.

⁴ Postanova Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy “Pro Osnovni napriamy zovnishnoi polityky Ukrainy” vid 02.07.1993 [<http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3360-12>, dostep: 11.07.2014].

⁵ Prohrama Komunistychnoi partii Ukrayiny [<http://www.slovnyk.ua/services/translit.php>, dostep: 11.07.2014].

⁶ Prohrama Prohresyvnoi sotsialistychnoi partii Ukrayiny [<http://vitrenko.org/article/456>, dostep: 11.07.2014].

The events of the Orange Revolution became a prime example of the recovery and the usage of anti-American stereotypes, rooted in the Cold War period. As we know, the confrontation over the future vector of Ukrainian foreign policy (West and Europe or East and Russia) had been a battlefield between two main political opponents and their followers: Viktor Yushchenko (who was associated with the pro-Western vector) and Viktor Yanukovych (who was associated with the pro-Russian vector).

To oppose Viktor the ideas were spread that stated that the United States were the unofficial organizer of the “Color Revolution”, the party “Nasha Ukraina” (“Our Ukraine”) acted by the instructions of the United States. V. Yushchenko by himself was called “American son-in-law” and portrayed as “dancing under the American pipe”. For illustration of these positions some stereotypical images of the U.S. were used (Uncle Sam and others), which were previously spread and replicated in the Soviet press. We can name a few examples: in 2004 in the Ukrainian parliament the representatives of the Communist Party hung posters where Viktor Yushchenko was depicted as Uncle Sam, also during the presidential election campaign some posters were spread which showed the ticket “Kyiv-Washington”. Later, when Viktor Yushchenko became a president, there were placards with the proposal to grant him a number of awards, such as: “President Yushchenko — the Order of the Supporter of NATO”, “President Yushchenko — the Order For Russophobia”, etc.

Anti-American slogans, mostly originated from the Soviet times, found support among the part of the Ukrainian population. The results of public opinion surveys, which are regularly conducted by various Ukrainian analytical centers, show this. Let’s present a few figures.

According to the results of social monitoring conducted by the Institute of Sociology of NAS of Ukraine, to the question “How do you feel about Ukraine joining NATO?” the number of respondents chose the answer “rather negative” in 2000 — 33.5 %, in 2004 — 38.5 %, in 2005 — 50.4 %, in 2006 — 64.4 %. Thus, we see that the number of people negatively minded across NATO rapidly increased from 33.5 % in 2000 to 64.4 % in 2006. At the same time, the number of people who chose the answer “rather positive” declined from 24.9 % in 2000 to 12.7 % in 2006⁷.

The data, obtained during the opinion poll by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, conducted in December 2005, on the question “Would you participate in a referendum on Ukraine’s accession to NATO if it would take place at the end of 2005”, showed that about 73 % of the respondents

⁷ Ukrainske suspilstvo 1992–2013. Stan ta dynamika zmin. Sotsiolohichni monitorynh, V. Vorona, M. Shulha (red.), Kyiv 2013.

confirmed their participation, including only 22 %, who would support the joining NATO, and 78 % would vote “against”.

According to the 2006 Razumkov Centre survey “Evaluate your attitude towards the countries and international organizations”, on a scale of 0 to 10, where “0” means extremely negative, and “10” — the most positive among all proposed countries and organizations (Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, European Union, Germany, World Trade Organization, Poland, the Soviet Union, Georgia, Turkey, the U.S., NATO) NATO and the U.S. have received the most negative ratings (NATO — 4,05; the U.S. — 5,13)⁸. To the question “What is NATO primarily for you?” the number of respondents chose the answer “aggressive military bloc” increased from 34.8 % in 2002 to 50.7 % in 2009. Answer “defensive union” in 2002 was chosen by 24.8 % of respondents, in 2009 by 23.9 %.

In 2006, according to the sociological poll “Is Ukraine threatened by...?”, 36.8 % of respondents chose “U.S.”, 36.9 % — “NATO”; in 2009: 27.6 % — “U.S.”, 30,9 % — “NATO”; in 2013: 19.4% — “U.S.”, 25,1 % — “NATO”.

According to the sociological poll “How would you vote if the referendum on Ukraine’s NATO accession was held the following Sunday?” in 2002, the numbers ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ were almost the same: “for NATO accession” would vote — 32.0 % of the respondents, “against NATO accession” — 32.2 %; in 2004 “for” — 15.1 %, “against” — 55.5 %; in 2005

“for” — 16.0 %, “against” — 61.4 %; in 2006 “for” — 17.2 %, “against” — 54.1 %. Thus, the results of the survey also confirmed the rapid growth in the number of citizens who did not want Ukraine joining the NATO.

At the same time, according to the sociological poll “If Russia becomes the NATO member, would you support Ukraine’s NATO accession?” among those, who were against Ukraine’s NATO accession, 27.7 % of respondents chose the answer “yes”, 27.6 % — “difficult to answer”. Thus, among a certain number of Ukrainian citizens we can find the need to adhere the orientation of Ukrainian foreign policy to the position of Russian Federation.

In connection with the revolutionary events in 2013–2014, attitude towards NATO and the United States had changed considerably. So, the results of social monitoring conducted in June 2014 showed that “for” NATO membership 40.8 % of all respondents would vote (or 45.4 % of those who are going to participate in the referendum). “Against” — 40.1 % would vote, or 36.4% of all those who are going to participate in the referendum. (Що маєтсья на увазі?)

During the revolutionary events in 2013–2014 the opponents of the democratic movement again resorted to use the stereotypes of the Soviet era, where the great role was played by the anti-American slogans. In 2004 the elderly people mainly supported anti-American slogans, but during the events of 2013–2014 pro-Russian youth joined this group. We can conclude that Soviet stereotypes and especially negative attitudes towards the United States still remain in the minds of a certain number of Ukrainians.

⁸ Sotsiological surveys of the Alexander Razumkov Centre [<http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/socpolls.php>, dostep: 10.07.2014].

REFERENCES

1. Hlossariy po politicheskoi psikhologii, Moskva, 1996.
<http://vocabulary.ru/dictionary/8/word/stereotip>
2. Postanova Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy «Pro Osnovni napriamy zovnishnioi polityky Ukrainy».
<http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3360-12>
3. Prohrama Komunistychnoi partii Ukrainy.
<http://www.slovnyk.ua/services/translit.php>
4. Prohrama Prohresyvnoi sotsialistychnoi partii Ukrainy.
<http://vitrenko.org/article/456>
5. Sotsiological Surveys of the Alexander Razumkov Centre.
<http://www.razumkov.org.ua/ukr/socpolls.php>
6. Ukrainske suspilstvo 1992–2013. Stan ta dynamika zmin. Sotsiolohichni monitorynh, V. Vorona, M. Shulha (red.), Kyiv 2013.

Валерія Покляцька

ОБРАЗ США У ПОСТ-РАДЯНСЬКІЙ УКРАЇНІ: РАДЯНСЬКА СПАДЩИНА ТА ЇЇ ПРОЯВИ У СУЧАСНІЙ ПОЛІТИЦІ (НА ПРИКЛАДІ ПОМАРАНЧЕВОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ 2004 Р.)

Однією з головних складових радянської зовнішньої політики й ідеології було позиціонування США як головного «ворога». Це мало великий вплив на формування стійкого негативного іміджу цієї країни у свідомості українців й інших народів СРСР. Після розпаду Радянського Союзу, з початком переходу до демократії, образ США докорінно змінився. Але у 2004 р., під час Помаранчевої революції, підтвердився той факт, що «радянська спадщина» негативного ставлення до США все ще присутня й активно використовується проросійськи орієнтованими силами.

Ключові слова: *радянська спадщина, радянські політичні стереотипи, ідеологія, «образ ворога», Помаранчева революція.*

Валерия Покляцкая

ОБРАЗ США В ПОСТСОВЕТСКОЙ УКРАИНЕ: СОВЕТСКОЕ НАСЛЕДИЕ И ЕГО ПРОЯВЛЕНИЯ В ТЕКУЩЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ОРАНЖЕВОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ 2004 Г.)

Одной из главных составляющих советской внешней политики и идеологии было позиционирование США как главного «врага». Это оказало большое влияние на формирование устойчивого негативного имиджа этой страны в сознании украинцев и других народов СССР. После распада Советского Союза, с началом перехода к демократии, образ США в корне изменился. Но в 2004 г., во время Оранжевой революции, подтвердился тот факт, что «советское наследие» негативного отношения к США все еще присутствует и активно используется пророссийски ориентированными силами.

Ключевые слова: *советское наследие, советские политические стереотипы, идеология, «образ врага», Оранжевая революция.*

Pokliatska Valeriya

UNITED STATES IMAGE IN POST-SOVIET UKRAINE: SOVIET HERITAGE AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN CURRENT POLITICS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF ORANGE REVOLUTION 2004)

One of the main components of Soviet foreign policy and ideology was the perception of the U.S. as the main “Enemy”. This had a great impact on the forming of a stable negative image of this country in minds of the Ukrainians and other Soviet nations. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the beginning of transition to democracy, image of the USA radically changed. But as it occurred in 2004 during the Orange revolution “Soviet heritage” of negative attitude towards the USA is still presented and actively used by pro-Russian forces. The aim of the research is to generalize the stereotypes and attitudes towards the United States in the independent Ukraine that remain from the Soviet time on the example of attitudes towards America during the events of the Orange Revolution and right after it.

In the article the author characterises the following consequences of the long-term dominance of the Communist regime in Ukraine: the conservation of the Soviet political stereotypes in the minds of many citizens; the political and civic apathy; fairly easy public obedience to the authorities; nostalgia for the Soviet past among a certain segment of the Ukrainian population.

There was illuminated anti-American rhetoric, which was actively used by the representatives of leftist political forces — namely Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU), the Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine (PSPU) and others. Clear anti-American policy was presented in the election programs of these parties. With the purpose to attract the attention of their followers, they used the ideological clichés, widespread in the days of the Soviet Union, such as “NATO — aggressive block”, “politics of imperialist globalization”, “affirmation of hegemony”, “armed aggression”, “redrawing of borders”, “neo-colonialists” etc. In the program of the Communist Party special attention was paid to the U.S. foreign policy and its “basic techniques”: “inciting nationalism”, “provocation of the “democratic”, “velvet”, “color” revolutions”, “the establishing of the puppet regimes in the sovereign states”.

The author concludes that during the revolutionary events in 2013–2014 the opponents of the democratic movement again resorted to use the stereotypes of the Soviet era, where the great role was played by the anti-American slogans. In 2004 the elderly people mainly supported anti-American slogans, but during the events of 2013–2014 pro-Russian youth joined this group. Soviet stereotypes and especially negative attitudes towards the United States still remain in the minds of a certain number of Ukrainians.

Key words: *Soviet heritage, Soviet political stereotypes, ideology, image of the “Enemy”, Orange Revolution.*

Дата надходження до редакції: 17.05.2016 р.