The theme of Cossacks in Shcherbytskyi’s work

Prysiazhniuk Yuriy

postgraduate student of the 3rd year of study at the Faculty of History and Philosophy; I. I. Mechnikov Odesa National University; Ukraine

Abstract.
Soviet heritage in Ukraine is not only monuments to Lenin and cultural stereotypes, but also infrastructure and industry. The fact that Ukraine is still a space state is also a Soviet legacy. It is obvious that the complexity and ambiguity of the Soviet past should call for more reflections on various topics related to the USSR. For example, in studies of the “Soviet” period, the modernization approach is practically not used, many topics remain outside the attention of researchers, the main focus is only on negative experiences (repressions, Holodomor, Russification). This is often a criticism not only of the Bolsheviks, but actually of the entire leftist idea and a kind of negative discrediting advance for future leftist organizations and parties in Ukraine. In addition, “Soviet” is often evaluated as something static, non-dynamic, purely negative. But the Soviet Ukraine of Kaganovich and Kosior is not the Soviet Ukraine of Shelest and Shcherbytskyi. There were changes in the average life expectancy of citizens of the republic and the structure of the family. At the same time, the process of Russification of the population intensified, one of the greatest man-made disasters in the history of mankind occurred, and the oppression of dissidents continued.

Keywords:
Shelest
Shcherbytskyi
Ukraine
Laws
CPSU
On March 30, 1972, at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, attacks were again heard on the Ukrainian leadership for Ukrainization, the lack of a "reaction" to nationalism, Ivan Dzyuba's book "Internationalism or Russification?", and P. Shelest was criticized for not sufficiently informing the Central Committee of the CPSU about these phenomena. L. Brezhnev made a critical comment about P. Shelest's book "Ukraine is our Soviet", although he later admitted that he had not read it himself, but spoke from the words of the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Mykhailo Suslov. The meeting revealed contradictions between the leaders of Ukraine. V. Shcherbytskyi expressed his solidarity with L. Brezhnev, admitted that the fight against nationalism in the republic was not enough, and criticized the praise of antiquity. P. Shelest in his memoirs called his performance treasonous (Petro Shelest... 2003: 366).

The last drop that filled L. Brezhnev's cup of patience was P. Shelest's criticism of the detente policy. In the spring of 1972, the United States resumed bombing North Vietnam. 4 Soviet ships were damaged in the port of Haiphong, several sailors died. According to some members of the Politburo, R. Nixon's visit to Moscow should have been canceled. The main opponent of rapprochement with the USA was M. Pidgorny, his ally was P. Shelest. They advocated a class approach in foreign policy, which L. Brezhnev considered his fiefdom. Individual members of the Politburo decided to remove themselves from this confrontation, as a result of which the positions of the Secretary General were under threat, as well as the fate of detente and the first steps to limit nuclear weapons (Zubok 2011: 317).

L. Brezhnev, who sincerely wanted to reach an agreement with the Americans and avert the threat of nuclear war, enlisted the support of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. On May 19, 1972, during the Plenum, he summoned P. Shelest to the Presidium room and shocked him with an offer that could not be refused. The leader of Ukraine was supposed to take the post of deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

On May 22, 1972, R. Nixon flew to Moscow. And already on
May 25, P. Shelest was removed from the post of first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine. In order to avoid "excesses", M. Suslov called Kyiv and ordered him to immediately arrive at his new place of work. It is difficult to say what the Kremlin wanted: to prevent a possible front at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine or to prevent the meeting of the sharp-tongued P. Shelest with the President of the United States. The farewell dinner was tense.

V. Shcherbytskyi said several wishes, but no one else uttered a word (Pogrebnyak 2006: 71). In the evening of the 24th, P. Shelest left by train, and already in the morning of the 25th, the Plenum unanimously elected V. Shcherbytskyi as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

On May 29–30, the new party leader of the republic received the President of the USA in Kyiv. True, O. Lyashko often appeared in the frame together with R. Nixon. V. Shcherbytsky learned the "lesson" of his predecessor well and in the future almost did not interfere in foreign policy.

In the positions of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi

The main "lesson" concerned the loyalty of the center. In relations with the Kremlin, V. Shcherbytskyi, according to his own words, always stood "on the positions of Bohdan Khmelnytskyi" (Gorbachev 1995: 203) and treated the "Moscow boyars", albeit cautiously, but quite loyally. At the same time, there was a widespread rumor that at the beginning of his reign, V. Shcherbytsky promised not to be the second Kaganovich for Ukraine (Gonchar 2004: 279, 397). One of the first steps of the new leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine was a decisive separation from the "Shelestiv region". At a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine on June 19–20, 1972, the predecessor was "beaten" for seven and a half hours. V. Shcherbytsky stated that nationalist and Zionist tendencies have increased in Ukraine. Under the pretext of democratization, the previous leadership fought Russification, there were calls to change the status of Ukraine, to independence, which found support abroad and even in Beijing. Secretary of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Ukraine F. Ovcharenko summarized the main points of the "first" speech:

"We saw the light of a number of vicious books, films, performances... Annual demonstrations near the Shevchenko monument were not cut off. The Choir "Homin" performed nationalist rites (carols). There is a desire to revise the past, praise antiquity, coat of arms, increase the authority of hetmans, adjusting to the interests of nationalism. Attempts to rehabilitate Mazepa and expose B. Khmelnytskyi as a traitor, revise the role of Petliura, the Central Rada, reassess the role of Skrypnyk, Artem, contrasting them. An ethnographic village museum is being created. Zaporizhia Sich, and how many more disabled people are in the basements...

... Many were unjustifiably rehabilitated (Levinsky, Khvylovy, Skrypnyk, Shumsky, Antonenko-Davydovych, Vynnychenko, etc.)...

Forcible introduction of the Ukrainian language (Pushkin edition in Ukrainian). Football broadcast in Ukrainian on the 1st program. In Sevastopol, everything is announced on the beach in Ukrainian. The situation with the Russian language is deteriorating" (Ovcharenko 2000: 251–253). Unconcealed attacks on P. Shelest were also heard, in particular mention was made of "skating on the Dnieper" with writers, the lack of information of the leadership of the Communist Party of Ukraine about criticism at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, personal immodesty, and the publication of books. After the transfer of P. Shelest to Moscow, open harassment of his supporters began in Ukraine. Emphasis was placed on ideology and national politics. The apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was demonstrably purged of "rustlers". And in 1973, a devastating review of P. Shelest's book "Ukraine is our Soviet" appeared, which was immediately removed from libraries. There is no doubt that the criticism of the current member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU could only be initiated by the Kremlin. And P. Shelest himself understood this, blaming L. Brezhnev and M. Suslov for his wanderings:

"Scherbytsky is by nature cowardly and mistrustful, and as far as I am concerned, he would not be able to spread...
abomination on his own. All this is done with the support and sanction of even Brezhnev's organization" (Petro Shelest... 2003: 373).

"Given the friendly relations with L. Brezhnev, the problems of Ukraine were considered the unspoken prerogative of the General Secretary. The latter was very warm to the leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, called him "Volodya" in private, and often invited him to his Crimean dacha." [1].

In the 1970s, V. Shcherbytskyi was forced to actively deal with ideological issues, although he was not a deep connoisseur of Marxism-Leninism. Given the friendly relations with L. Brezhnev, the problems of Ukraine were considered the unspoken prerogative of the Secretary General. The latter treated the leader of the Communist Party very warmly, called him "Volodya" in private, and often invited him to his Crimean dacha. Therefore, V. Shcherbytskyi could solve all work issues directly with L. Brezhnev. Not the only exception was the sphere of ideology. Although the Soviet system predicted that the leader of the party should also be an ideologue and only he had the right to say a new word in Marxism-Leninism, and other party leaders, the party apparatus and humanitarian scientists could only interpret his thoughts, but since L. Brezhnev had neither relevant knowledge nor training, so de facto a key role in ideology. Probably, it was not without the intervention of M. Suslov that the appointment of the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party for Ideology took place. Instead of the "whistleblower" Fyodor Ovcharenko, the choice was made in favor of Valentin Malanchuk, a prolific publicist, doctor of historical sciences, who made a career out of exposing nationalism and attracted the attention of the secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Contrary to the official position of the leadership of the Communist Party of Ukraine about the triumph of internationalism in the republic, he published a number of articles in Moscow publications in which he considered the fight against nationalism as one of the urgent tasks of the party. P. Shelest could not stand this, and after the inspection V. Malanchuk was removed from the post of secretary of the Lviv Regional Committee and transferred to the post of Deputy Minister of Higher Education of the
Ukrainian SSR. In fact, it meant the end of the party career. He was saved from the final massacre by the resignation of P. Shelest.

V. Shcherbytsky himself explained this choice as follows:

"The Central Committee of the CPSU, for example, attaches primary importance to the fight against manifestations of nationalism in the republics. That's why I decided: let Malanchuk deal with the nationalists so that I don't have a headache" (Lyashko 2001: 10).

Subsequently, when the acceleration did not give quick results, M. Gorbachev transferred reformist accents to the political sphere. The Secretary General considered political processes to be the main task of reconstruction, and V. Shcherbytskyi considered the economy and scientific and technological progress to be the main task. The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine did not perceive the second stage of restructuring, and over time, disappointment came to M. Horbachev. According to V. Masol, V. Shcherbytskyi understood earlier than many others that the restructuring "as a process of improving socialism began to be replaced by its gradual dismantling, the country's descent into an "unregulated market"" (Masol 1993: 66). "It is necessary to remember that the invisible hand of the market is a blind hand," he told his assistants (Wrublewski 1993: 218-219). The personal qualities of V. Shcherbytskyi — a consistent man with faith in the inviolability of the party's decisions, a workaholic whose slogan was "we need to talk less and plow the plow" (Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi... 2003: 85, 123) pushed him into conflict with the General Secretary, who the nickname "talking bird" was fixed. And political experience and a tendency to Fabianism suggested keeping their thoughts to themselves.

The Chernobyl disaster dealt V. Shcherbytskyi a blow from which he was unable to recover. And although his guilt was limited to underestimating the scale of the accident and holding a demonstration on May 1, 1986, the political consequences were colossal. It is difficult to say whether he was aware of the scale of the tragedy, because the Chernobyl NPP was under the control of the Union, the Union government officials and scientists in the capital cast panic on the leadership of the Ukrainian SSR, continued to talk about the
rapid launch of new power units, and the demonstration was demanded by M. Gorbachev himself. For its failure, the General Secretary threatened V. Shcherbytskyi with the loss of his party ticket (Vrublevsky 1993: 210–211). Historian Y. Shapoval believes that at that time V. Shcherbytskyi "won a politician whom life had taught him to be silent and not to stand out" (Shapoval 2003: 126). The demonstration took place despite the fact that the wind changed direction at night and a radioactive cloud passed over Kyiv. The families of the leaders of Ukraine, including the first secretary, were also in Khreshchatyk. It was something similar to the sacrifice that the Soviet rulers made in the name of unity with the people in difficult times (the tragic fate of the children of Y. Stalin and M. Khrushchev during the war years). Only in June 1989, under pressure from the public, V. Shcherbytsky appealed to the Central Committee of the CPSU with a demand to stop the placement of new nuclear power plants in Ukraine.

Although the Soviet command-and-administrative system made it possible to quickly mobilize all forces to eliminate the accident (mobilization of motor vehicles and preparations for the evacuation of Pripyat began already on the night of April 26), organize resettlement, build housing for displaced people, and take 250,000 schoolchildren out of the affected area, Chernobyl quickly turned into a political factor, started more than one successful and long-term political career and began to be perceived as a consequence of the existence of the Soviet political system with the absolute power and ideological monopoly of the center, ignoring alternative opinions, hiding information from citizens. According to the French researcher J.-P. Dupuy, Chernobyl did not become a lesson for the whole world, because the disaster was recognized as "Soviet, not nuclear" (Dupuy 2007: 244).

V. Shcherbytskyi defended the Communist Party's monopoly on power to the last, and he obstructed the creation of the People's Movement of Ukraine, which he saw as an alternative party and a political competitor. The initiators of the Movement's creation at that time assured that it would support restructuring and was aimed "at the realization of Lenin's concept of socialism" (Provisniki... 2009: 20). In February 1989, during M. Gorbachev's visit to Kyiv, a group of writers, especially O. Honchar and D. Pavlychko, raised the question...
that the Communist Party of Ukraine was preventing them from spreading democracy and glasnost, creating a Movement.

M. Gorbachev asked: "What's the matter, Volodymyr Vasylovich? People want to work for reconstruction..." [1].

V. Shcherbytsky endured a pause and answered quite harshly: "That's what they tell you, Mykhailo Serhiyevich. And here, on the spot, it is clearer to us what is to what" (Kravchuk 2002: 13–14).

After the general secretary's promise that the party would not hinder the creation of the Movement, V. Shcherbytskyi asked for his resignation for the first time. M. Gorbachev persuaded him to stay. But the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party agreed to hold the Constituent Assembly of the Movement only when the issue of his resignation had already been resolved. It was held on September 28, 1989 with all due honors.

L. Kravchuk claimed that M. Gorbachev was afraid of one of the "bisons" of the Communist Party, so he felt a certain relief with his retirement (Kravchuk 2002: 13). Perhaps the General Secretary did not dare to displace V. Shcherbytsky and in view of the mass riots in Almaty after the resignation of another national leader of the Brezhnev spill, D. Kunayev ("Zheltoksan"). According to V. Lytvyn, the political longevity of V. Shcherbytskyi was determined by the strength of his position in the republic, the stability of the situation, the relatively good supply of food and goods to the population, and the personal modesty of the leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine in comparison with his colleagues from other republics (Lytvyn 2000: 19).

During the years of governing the republic, V. Shcherbytskyi sought to get rid of burdensome party rituals, which took a lot of time and money. In particular, he canceled the meetings of the first secretary at the border of the regions with a traditional feast, the New Year's meeting of the heads of the republic. Members of the Politburo, secretaries of the Central Committee, deputy heads of the Council of Ministers and their wives gathered for a joint celebration only on May 1 and November 7 in Zalissa. V. Shcherbytskyi was against managers repairing private houses, cottages, and cars. Because of this, you could lose
not only your position, but also your party ticket. The leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine did not approve of the desire of high-ranking officials to study at a graduate school and defend theses. Today it is well known the price of such "postgraduate students" and such "dissertations", the lion's share of which people whose name is on the cover not only did not write, but also did not read. Unlike the republics of Central Asia and Transcaucasia, the party leadership of Ukraine was not corrupt. One of V. Shcherbytskyi's favorite sayings was: "What will people say?" This is how he motivated the refusal of various applicants.

Most memoirists testify to V. Shcherbytskyi's personal modesty and unpretentiousness in everyday life. Like all people who survived the hardships of war, he was extremely thrifty and even made sure that the light in the apartment did not burn in vain. The argument was iron-clad: "The light bulb is on - the miner is working." In addition to the apartment, the Shcherbytskyi family had a dacha in Mezhyhirya, where a two-story house was built. In 2007, it was demolished by order of V. Yanukovych. Over time, the excessive love for honors and orders, which developed in L. Brezhnev, could not help but leave an impression on his associates. The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, who had previously wondered why the titles of two Heroes were needed (Lyashko 2001: 279), later did not object to being awarded the second Hammer and Sickle gold medal, the installation of a lifetime bronze bust, and the awarding of the Lenin Prize in the field of rocket engineering. And although he rarely wore awards in public, he obviously perceived them as something due to his status. V. Shcherbytsky also made a significant contribution to the formation of L. Brezhnev's "personality cult" in Ukraine.

References:
HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY,
ARCHIVAL STUDIES


citations: