

National ideology in a multicultural world

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Abstract. This article attempts a social-philosophical analysis of national ideology as a crucial mechanism for expressing national consciousness in a multicultural world. National ideology is viewed as a specific form of ideology, which expresses the interests, needs, and mentality of a national-ethnic community. The authors stress that this phenomenon is associated with the national specificity of its sociocultural context. National ideology is viewed not only in its traditional interpretation as a rational expression of the political interests of a national community – the article emphasizes a special role of a nation's oftentimes unconscious aspiration toward preserving its ethnic boundaries. The author conducts an analysis of national ideology through the prism of the dissonance of narratives in a multicultural society.

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Introduction

The need for the study of national ideology is associated with a number of reasons. One of them is the lack of clear understanding of this phenomenon in modern social science. The thing is that lately philosophical-political literature has been dominated by studies into specific components of the topic declared in the title of this article, i.e. the ideology and diverse manifestations of the national – national consciousness, mentality, character, psychology, identity, etc., taken “severally”, as it were. When it comes to national ideology, we feel there is a vacuum that needs to be filled. Analysis shows that many studies aimed at defining the structure of such a broad concept as national consciousness oftentimes do not even mention national ideology, which is its crucial element.

The term “ideology” itself has been a sort of “compromised” nowadays – in construing this phenomenon, they place the major focus on such of its negative aspects as the hidden, symbolic nature of acting on people, the indissoluble link with the shill and biased media, ideology as an instrument for the realization of power relations, etc.

In Russian science, waning interest in the issue of ideology has been associated, to a great degree, with that, as a result of radical transformations in society, there has been a drastic change of attitude towards the phenomenon itself. In the 90s, there was declared the renunciation of Communist ideology and setting of a course for the creation of a de-ideologized society, but lately there has been a realization of the need to seek an answer to the following questions: What ideology is really possible in and would fit Russia? What spiritual

ideals and values will help knit its people together? [1, pp: 41].

In Western scientific thought, the departure from issues of ideology was, on the one hand, associated with the spread of the scientism worldview, and that of the postmodernist paradigm, on the other, many representatives whereof assert that the concept of “ideology” has run its course. At the same time, in the view of D. Hawkes, postmodernism itself is the “veritable apotheosis of ideology”, the “ideology of globalization” [2].

Despite the fact that the term “ideology” is used very often in socio-humanitarian sciences, there is still no clear-cut universally accepted definition for it, since the complexity and ambiguousness of this phenomenon give rise to various approaches toward construing it. Thus, for instance, T. Eagleton in a known work dwells on six possible approaches toward defining ideology [3]. Thus, there is an imperious need for a comprehensive, social-philosophical conceptualization of the phenomenon for the analysis and identification of the specificity of national ideology.

Main part

Marxist philosophy has traditionally emphasized the class nature of ideology and considered as its central function the development of types of thinking and behavior and social action programs, which are in agreement with the interests of a particular class. In our view, in the present day world, and especially in Russia, there ought to be activated work on working out a unifying ideology, despite the fact that Article 13 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation prohibits the existence of a single state ideology, which, in our view, is ignoring

real processes taking place in society and an attempt to “veil” acute contradictions existing in the country’s various spheres of life, including the national sphere. Russian society is split, divided – it contains varied, at times polarized, notions and value orientations, with a high degree of conflict-proneness in relationships. Working out an ideology that would reflect common national interests and thereby ensure the spiritual unity of society, as a whole, and particular social groups is a crucial objective for the state.

When it comes to the essence of the phenomenon of ideology itself, national science has traditionally emphasized its rational nature. Such an interpretation seems to constrict, impoverish the content of the phenomenon of “ideology”, and we share the view of scholars who include the irrational component in this concept as well. Thus, for instance, in her thesis G.P. Khorina provides a rationale for the notion of ideology as the **intuitively forming** (marked in bold by the authors) consciousness of a social association [4]. In our view, the function of ideology on the articulation and theoretical styling of people’s irrational feelings and aspirations is one of the fundamental ones; it is yet to be conceptualized.

Thus, today there is an imperious need to formulate approaches toward both the conceptualization of the phenomenon of ideology and working out and realizing by society of major ideological vectors for its national development – specifically, in Russia, where notions of national ideology and the national idea have, in essence, not been formed and the lack of such clear-cut guideposts facilitates the unbalancing of the very foundations of social life. This becomes even more important considering the fact Russia is a multinational society. In modern Russia, there are 186 ethnicities, peoples, and ethnic groups, which historically emerged and have been living in their native ethnic territory. However, today we have to acknowledge that these peoples lack the commonness of national interests and admit that it is, to a sizeable extent, an aggregate of ethnicities and ethnic groups and is not a single nation. Therefore, a crucial objective in modern Russia is to work out a national-state ideology as a pivot that brings together all the foundations of society, since “without unity there is no nation – there is just a multinational population, i.e. people not linked with the fate of the country; there is no Russia as a power either – there is a geographic space named “Russia” [5].

National ideology

As has already been noted above, there is no clear-cut understanding of the phenomenon of national ideology in modern social science, virtually

no fundamental works dedicated to this phenomenon. Even if this issue is given consideration, that happens only in the context of the study of nationalism. When it comes to defining national ideology, here too, in our view, the meaning of unconscious feelings, emotions, and motives is underestimated.

We find appropriate the view of I.A. Isayev that national ideology cannot be described only in terms of the rational, that it initially exists in the depths of the collective unconscious [6]. We can assert that national ideology as viewed in this aspect is the theoretical styling of the dialectics of the conscious and unconscious in national consciousness. In this sense, national ideology can be viewed as a theoretical styling of national psychology. However, it should be noted that there are two aspects we can single out in the study of national ideology: institutional and sociocultural. In terms of the first one, national ideology exists as a particular system of strategic programs on all spheres of the life activity of a national community; the second aspect underscores the “ontologicalness”, existence of national ideology in society, including at the everyday, ordinary level. We construe national ideology as a system of views, notions, values, and ideals, which reflect the construction by a national-ethnic group of its past, present, and future, which are governed by the historical conditions of a nation’s life, mentality, and psychological mindset. Thus, the central functions of national ideology are, in our view, the diachronic, synchronic, and futurological functions.

The study of the specificity of national ideology is indissolubly linked with the analysis of the sociocultural context, within the frame whereof it emerges and exists. In the view of G.P. Khorina, it is the existence and influence of national cultures that define the entire diversity of varieties of traditional ideologies we observe in the world nowadays. Ideological doctrine is capable of becoming a mobilizing force only when the world of values declared by it overlaps with the fundamental values of culture created by an ethnos. Furthermore, national ideology comprises such substantial elements as notions of the fate and the purpose of the nation, the vector of historical development, etc. [7].

National ideology, being a part of the culture of a specific society accumulates in itself notions of the nation’s goals, interests, and needs and a broad spectrum of value, psychological, and archetypal characteristics expressing the nation’s consciousness. Thereby, it serves as a sort of mediator between social processes taking place in that society, on the one hand, and the sphere of spiritual life of a specific national community, on the other. In national ideology, there is a clear-cut manifestation of the

genetic interrelation existing between various elements of culture, and it, certainly, reflects in a multicultural world the specificity of political processes taking place both inside and outside society. However, these properties are refracted, above all, through the national-cultural properties of meaning-formation, cognitive structures, characteristics of perception, ways of structuring spiritual values, etc., which are inherent in a given national community and express the forms of its cultural life. Analyzing the complexity of the modern cultural situation amid the plurality of cultures, T. Eagleton writes: "Culturally speaking, however, belonging to one nation rather than another is so vitally important that people are quite often prepared to kill or die over the question. If politics is what unifies, culture is what differentiates" [8, pp: 90].

C. Geertz in his work "The Interpretation of Cultures" appropriately views ideology as an indispensable element that functions within a broad sociocultural context. The scholar notes that "ideology is a sort of attempt to impart to obscure social processes a sense", and whatever ideologies may be, – a projection of unconscious fears, a masking of hidden motives, phatic expressions of group solidarity, – they, above all, are a "map" of contradictory social reality and a matrix for the creation of collective consciousness [9, pp: 216-220].

It is national culture that creates a symbolic space within which there occurs the construction of the objective and subjective foundations of ideology. In national ideology, there always find a reflection issues of national belonging and interethnic interaction; however, in the modern world there occurs a change of national narratives themselves and, moreover, there is recorded the dissonance of narratives.

D. Schiffrin defines narratives as a "form of discourse through which we reconstruct and represent past experience both for ourselves and for others" [10, pp: 321]. The conceptualization of social phenomena through narratives is one of the major components of social-humanitarian science. This feature was emphasized by P. Ricoeur, who noted that narratives concurrently style identity and are a medium through which the self is expressed. Within the frame of national cultures, amid their interaction, the existence of ideologies takes place in the space created by various narratives. Note that the consequences of the availability of narratives often opposed to each other are not determined univocally: on the one hand, they are accompanied by the emergence of spaces of tension but, on the other, they can be viewed as a potential for the subsequent renovation, restructurization of the sphere of interaction in an intercultural space. National

ideologies are inconceivable without being oriented towards the cultural memory of one's people, national roots, historical images, mythological themes, and the entire wealth of the spiritual legacy of one's national community. Thereby, ideology is a reproduction of narrative which is a symbolic expression of national-cultural identity needed to maintain ethnic boundaries. Analyzing narratives from the standpoint of political discourse, Ye.I. Sheigal points up three types of narratives: personal, ideological and event-trigger. The last two are particularly significant to bringing our issue to light. As an example of ideological narratives, the author examines the concept of *Exceptional America*: "There is a viewpoint that in order to win over the voters, the democrats need to reclaim this narrative – the most significant in American political history. The gist of the narrative is that America is not just one leader among many world leaders, but the leader of leaders – an exceptional, high-minded, and magnanimous country that can encourage other nations. "Europeans can provide examples of immoral and nefarious actions in the external policy of the US. However, the narrative of exceptionality, which is traced to the utopian doctrine of the nation's founders, has always resonated with Americans" [11]. Event narratives, in the author's view, act as a rationale for a particular political line or particular political moves as an explanation for an existing political situation. Speaking of the functions of narratives within this context, it is appropriate to mention the "narrative of animosity", in which politologists see the driving force behind ethnic conflicts. According to S. Kaufman, the origins of interethnic aggression are rooted in "myth-symbol complexes", which are but mythologized narratives of ethnoculture [12]. These narratives "embody the historical experience of an ethnos, the result of which is the perception of particular ethnic groups through the prism of the relationship between the pursuer and the victim. Such narratives cause emotions of enmity, while aggression, in turn, is the effect of such emotions" [ibidem].

Today we can assert there is a dissonance of narrative on oneself and the other, which exists as a source of inner contradictions in interethnic relations in modern society. The polarization of the "us" and "them" creates, in the words of F. Jameson, a "space of tension", in which each element aspires toward establishing oneself in a binary opposition to the other. [13, pp: 12].

The ideology of polarization, thus, can generate a social discourse that structurizes all the elements of culture, leads to conceptualizing the "other" as opposing, the consequence of which in a multicultural world inevitably becomes sociocultural

disintegration. The interaction that takes place in the sphere of interethnic relations, which is characterized, just like other areas of the life of modern society, by volatility and constant variation, establishes that, on the one hand, national ideology, which uses national narratives, is sharpening contradictions deeply permeating all spheres of the modern globalizing world, becoming an expression of centrifugal forces. Therefore, many manifestations of the national in a multicultural society are permeated all the way through by disagreement between the local and the global, which shows through in negating ethnical specificity and the emergence of a space of tension between stability and variation. On the other hand, the major vector of the development of national ideologies is aimed at overcoming the inconsistency and instability of national life, the deep uncertainty of the future with a view to preserving adaptation mechanisms that help maintain former ethnic boundaries. Therefore, the analysis of the characteristics of the phenomenon of national ideology in a multicultural world facilitates the identification of explicit and implicit factors in interethnic interaction and the deeper conceptualization of the ontological and gnoseological nature of ideology, its influence on the construction of the intercultural space.

Inferences

National ideology is a central mechanism for expressing national consciousness in a multicultural world. National ideology is a system of views, notions, values, and ideals reflecting the construction by a national-ethnic group of its past, present, and future, which are governed by the historical conditions of a nation's life, mentality, and psychological mindset. In this regard, we have singled out the diachronic, synchronic, and futurological functions as the central functions of national ideology. The further study of national ideology will be more productive in considering and identifying its irrational component, in which the nation's unconscious aspiration toward preserving its ethnic boundaries is also reflected. Marking out the institutional and sociocultural aspects in the study of national ideology helps effect a more adequate analysis of this phenomenon. There is a remarkable heuristic potential in the analysis of national ideology through the prism of the dissonance of narratives in a multicultural society.

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