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THE CONCEPT OF AMERICANIZATION IN SOCIAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

Summary. The article gives the description of concept «Americanization» and provides the analysis of this phenomenon in several aspects of social studies. The views of some investigators on the problem of «Americanization» are presented in the article.

Keys words: americanization, globalization, westernization, the USA, Western Europe.

According to the widespread interpretation, americanization is a process of gradual change in social relations and culture into standards and patterns that are generally accepted in the United States. The main guideline of this change is the so-called «American life style». American values adopted by other societies are integrated in the intrinsic system of norms in these societies and change its values, traditions, rules of behavior and law, as well as certain institutions.

Social and philosophical meaning of americanization is considered in works by foreign (J. Baudrillard, H. Casanova, A. Utkin, F. Fukuyama, S. Huntington and others) and Ukrainian researchers (E. Martyniuk, L. Filippovich etc.).

The concept of americanization did not arise before XIX century. For example, in the encyclical «Rerum novarum» («New Things»), in 1899, Pope Leo XIII stated his «social» position as opposed to «Communist Manifesto». The Pope noted that «Americanism» makes the church become more adapted to the modern civilization by showing indulgence towards modern popular theories and methods, including Marxism.

To define americanization more clearly, it is necessary to distinguish it from such common term as westernization and globalization.

The thing that americanization, globalization and westernization have in common is the impact on socially important processes in one or more states. In my opinion, despite the fact that these concepts have the above-mentioned similarity, I have to draw a line between americanization as an independent phenomenon, which characterizes the effect of the US culture on many aspects of modern society, westernization as dissemination of American and other Western values around the

world and globalization as a process characterized by the expansion of certain phenomena over different states. Some time ago one could argue that americanization was a form of westernization, but now in Western Europe they speak of americanization as of inherent process in European countries [4, 124].

Ambiguous attitude to the USA has undergone tremendous change since the mid-twentieth century, to be exact, after World War II, the collapse of Nazism and the end of previously existing European system of national states.

There is a tradition that everyone who studies the US appeals to the work by Alexis de Tocqueville, who believed that the Europeans had a view of America before its colonization: «without any notion of America, European colonists would have never crossed the ocean»; and that «the image of America represented the New World» [6, 74].

According to Tocqueville, new ideals of equality and freedom were «exported» by Europe. After the American Revolution these ideals became a reality. A new world was being born in the new state. At that time Europe and the United States broke up: «Whatever Europe thought of America, it could never become a model or guiding idea for the United States again. Since then, the United States as an independent country have incarnated both a dream and a nightmare in European views. Until the end of the nineteenth century, this dream included such ideas as freedom from harassment, assertion of human autonomy and power against the weight of the past that seemed to hinder the development of such a new force as social and cultural modernization. However, the idea of America remains an incredibly exaggerated and distorted picture of reality, where the new features of European civilization were clearly developed» [6, 75].

The U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower noted in his speech in 1955 that «Americanism» is realization of the Supreme Being. Neither the American form of government, nor an American way of life can exist without faith in God» [9]. This is confirmed by references to God contained in the Declaration of Independence and also by the fact that the most important state events are

accompanied by religious rituals. Prayers and sermons open various business meetings.

According to the French philosopher J. Baudrillard, the author of the work «America» («Amérique» Paris, 1986) — the US cities look like «the inhuman features of extraterrestrial object» created by «transsexual capitalist arrogance of mutants». «The fact that the United States have no past that could be understood, allows Baudrillard to draw a conclusion that America is «the only really existing primitive society», although it belongs to the future. America is «the original version of modernity» and it is its cities that are in the center of the world. America is the hyperreality, because it is a utopia that «from the very beginning was considered to be put into practice» [3, 23].

This country, according to Baudrillard, is able to reveal itself to a European person only, because only the Europeans are able to see in America «a perfect simulacrum of immanence and material embodiment of all values» [3, 28].

Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies V. Alpatov believes that one of the most important aspects of americanization is its manifestation in the languages. The American view of society is closely associated with the English language. In the United States and in some other countries as well, there always predominated the concept of a single language. For example, national minority languages in the UK were not recognized and repressed until the second half of XX century. Even in Ireland, it was impossible to restore the Irish language as a means of communication; it could be a national symbol, but English predominated in all spheres of life except Catholic liturgy. There were no specific measures taken to support the English language in the USA (English is official language in some states only), but the outlook of 'melting pot' presupposed that a person of any origin can become an American having mastered the common American culture including the English language.

The differences in americanization of language manifest themselves in official policy and public opinion around the world. In France the restrictions to spreading the English language and American culture are the most rigid in Europe, while in Germany the process of americanization in the language sphere (as well as in other social spheres) is quite intense. At the International Conference on Language and Culture that was held in October 2003 in Alma-Ata there was discussed an interesting idea that Germany still «suffers from historical guilt for Nazism, and therefore the ideals of national culture and the worldwide significance of the German language still seem to be offensive that greatly contributes to the Americanization» [1, 24].

As stated in one of the publications on the subject, «the United States are on the top of the modern world hierarchy and this position in the foreseeable future is threatened most of all by their own inability to cope with internal problems and by their role and place in the world»[5].

Let us consider, for example, such a distinctive country as Japan that for a long time has been suffering from the subconscious identity crisis. America became a model for Japan, that however had a hidden cause for irritation of the Japanese in relation to the US, because assimilation threatened the national Japanese values. In public opinion, the americanization of the country was the aim of the Japanese authorities. This strategy favored the development of modern and democratic Japan, and brought up a question of the «new Japan» and its national identity. The national pride of the Japanese was hurt, because this strategy was imported from the USA. As Japan approximates to the American standards and develops national self-consciousness as independent and modern country, it begins searching for national unique identity. Japanese writer K. Abe calls it a kind of aporia: «the more intense the process of americanization becomes, the higher the «backward wave» is [8].

The suppression of national identity led to the growth of popularity of national idea and national state project. Thus the fundamentalist theories of Japanese identity (*nihondzin* parties) arouse and became popular as a kind of intellectual reaction to the americanization.

Russian scholar A. Utkin speaks about the American influence: «such a correlation of forces has never existed before. Pax Britannica lived parsimoniously. The British Army was smaller than any other European army, and even the Royal Navy was as large as the subordinate two fleets together; nowadays, all the navies taken together are smaller than the American one. Napoleonic France and Spain in time of Philip II had powerful enemies and were parts of the multi-polar system. Charlemagne's empire was merely Western Europe. The Roman Empire extended its power much further, but there was another great empire at the same time - the Persian Empire and vast China»[7, 3].

As noted by C. Powell, the former US State Secretary: «The parallels with the prosperity of France in the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries and Britain in the nineteenth century are inconsistent because both these countries were still parts of the single European constellation of forces. Paris and London were first among equals. Washington at present time is in different conditions - even the joint power of potential competitors does not give them a chance for equal confrontation.

In short, the modern American empire is beyond compare»[9].

It is important to note that in the second half of the twentieth century there was a hypothetical possibility that the Soviet Union would have used its superiority in Eurasia. Today the situation is different – the United States have everything except equal competitors. «The world history has never seen such a system of sovereign states where the one state would have utterly incontestable supremacy» [11].

The U.S. Defense Secretary D. Rumsfeld said bluntly that the events on September 11, 2001 «created opportunities similar to those created by World War II – the opportunities to rearrange the world» [11]. This period was a beginning of a new historical phase – the reference point for the further advancement of americanization to the East. Previously americanization was a process more usual for Europe, Asia Minor, Australia. Today we can speak about the comprehensive and global americanization spreading over all the parts of the globe.

The interesting fact is that the americanization in modern social studies is regarded as an analytical category and at the same time it is a symbol for the comprehensive interpretation of the twentieth century history. According to Mary Nolan, German political scientist, «americanization is adoption of American patterns of production and consumption, technology and management practices, cultural products and institutions of mass culture, gender roles, and entertainment»[12].

Grounding on the foregoing materials I can draw the following conclusions:

- today the concept of americanization can have both negative and positive meaning;
- this concept may coincide with the terms «globalization» and «westernization»;
- its further meanings depend on the US influence on the global community in future;
- americanization is mostly widespread in the societies without extreme nationalism;
- americanization is a process imported from the USA as opposed to the globalization;
- the intense process of americanization leads to intensification of anti-American attitudes in society;
- americanization manifests itself in various spheres of social life.

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Гольд О.Ф. Понятие «американизация» в истории социально-философской мысли. – Статья.

Аннотация. В статье дана характеристика понятию «американизация», а также рассмотрен этот феномен в некоторых аспектах социальной философии.

Ключевые слова: американизация, вестернизация, глобализация, тейлоризм, фордизм.

Гольд О.Ф. Поняття «американізація» в історії соціально-філософської думки. – Стаття.

Анотація. В статті дана характеристика поняттю «американізація», а так само розглянуто цей феномен у деяких аспектах соціальної філософії.

Ключові слова: американізація, глобалізація, вестернізація, тейлоризм, фордизм.