

DOI 10.26886/2414-634X.2(57)2023.2

UDC: 979

**RIGHT BANK UKRAINE IN THE IMPERIAL EXPANSIONIST POLICY
OF RUSSIA BEFORE THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE
COMMONWEALTH IN 1793**

Pavlo Khomenko, PhD student

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9263-1496>

e-mail: pashahomenko@ukr.net

The State Institution "Institute of World History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine", Kiev

The article reveals the influence and foreign policy role of Russia before the second partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, shows the expansionist plans to reject Right-Bank Ukraine. Some aspects of state ideology as a fundamental theoretical basis and political strategy of modern Russia are analyzed. The development of Ukrainian territories in the conditions of prevailing Russian factors and their absorption by the empire is studied

Keywords: *Russian state ideology, section Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, geopolitics, Russian-Polish relations, annexation of Right Bank Ukraine, expansion.*

Introduction. In the conditions of the fight against Russian aggression, the preservation and reformation of Ukrainian statehood and its defense of its subjectivity in the modern globalized world, Russia represents the most dangerous external factor of socio-political and economic destabilization in Eastern European countries. The principles of such a policy are clearly reflected in the official Russian ideology, the essence of which has remained unchanged for several centuries in the states that are territorially

in close proximity to Russia, which must be clearly aware of the degree of real threats and seek ways of collective protection.

An attempt to explain the reason for such constancy can be traced in the works of a number of specialists, including Ya. Hrytsak, O. Sytin, M. Solonin, Yu. Afanasyev, B. Nemtsov, M. Kasyanov, A. Illarionov, A. Piontkovsky, S. Belkovsky, and others.

Therefore, the task of this work is to compare the fundamental foundations of modern Russian state ideology with the conceptual provisions of geopolitics. The most promising is the geopolitical approach to understanding the fundamental principles of the Russian state ideology, which has already been applied several times, but is far from exhaustive.

It was the second half of the 18th century, during which the geopolitical components of the Russian state (world level) were formed. Since this century, Russian foreign policy has been directed to Western Europe through Poland (Ukrainian territories) and further to the West. At the specified time, the foreign policy scads powerfully turned the vector of geopolitical priorities from domestic to foreign policy, from eastern to western directions.

All the economic efforts of the Russian Empire were directed to the development of the North-West region, which in the long run opened up the possibility of a strategic partnership with major European powers for the empire. In confirmation of this general line of the foreign policy of the Russian Empire, Catherine II in the "Order" of July 30, 1767 noted that Russia is a European state, the Russian people are a European people, and autocracy is the inviolable form of government on the geopolitical scale of the state.

The research methodology is based on the principles of historicism and objectivity accepted in the national historical science, a systematic analysis of the history of the divisions of Poland and Russia's participation

in them. Consciously abandoning the nationally-limited approach and unproductive "moralization" formed in the historiography of divisions, the issue of the divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is considered through the prism of geopolitics, in the context of the long-term crisis that occurred in various regions of Europe, the existence of cause-and-effect relationships that determined their nature and logic.

A geopolitical macro-analysis of the development of Russian-Polish relations within the framework of the evolution of the European system of international relations in the second half of the 18th century is combined with a micro-analysis of a wide range of events in the international and political life of Europe that accompanied the divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Scientific development of questions. It is necessary to distinguish between the concepts of "Polish question" and "Polish affairs" in the Russian-language professional discourse. Polish affairs is a much broader concept, under which one can understand, firstly, the entire history of Poland, secondly, any foreign policy and international relations that connected and still connect countries and peoples with Poland and Poles, thirdly, the political interests of countries in Poland and attempts to manipulate Polish foreign and domestic policy

It is the third meaning of the concept of "Polish affairs" that was characteristic of the system of diplomatic relations that developed in Europe until the middle of the 18th century. For example, when Catherine II used the phrase "Polish affairs", she meant primarily the interests of the Russian state in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The Russian Empire was similar to the absolute majority of the known history of empires in that, firstly, it consisted of adjacent possessions and, secondly, it set itself the goal of at least partial absorption or integration of its peripheries [2, p.71]. Analyzing scientific works, we focus on the fact that

Russian historians O.I. Yelyseeva and P.V. Stegnii, relying on official documents, archival materials and the achievements of historical science, in their sufficiently objective and well-considered studies traced how the official St. Petersburg, Russian diplomacy and leading Russian dignitaries step by step built doctrines and implemented visionary plans to expand the territory of the empire with the help of the divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the annexation of Right-Bank Ukraine [5, p. 24].

The autocracy carefully hid the true goals of its political course and real actions related to their implementation both in the issues of the geographical territory of Right Bank Ukraine and its indigenous population with all its propaganda, including the religious machine. The accession of Ukrainian lands to the Russian Empire was interpreted as the protection of the native inhabitants of the Right Bank from the arbitrariness that prevailed under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the policy of Russian autocracy in the region was implemented under the slogan of returning ancient "Russian" lands to the bosom of the state, providing assistance to fellow tribesmen by blood and faith.

Regarding as typologically incorrect the approach of the basic Russian national concept of M. S. Solovyov that Russia, participating in the divisions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, only returned Ukrainian and Belarusian lands, without annexing even a fifth of the territory of native Poland. P. V. Stegnii convincingly proves that the strategy and tactics of Russian diplomacy were determined by several groups of factors - geographical location, growing military, economic power and political influence of the Russian Empire, as well as based on the system of international relations [16, p. 37].

There are no differences in this with the justification of the main goal in the mentioned divisions of Catherine II made by M. M. Lukin back in the 30s of the last century, who tried not to miss her destiny [10, p. 35]. Moreover,

the empress considered the southern, Black Sea direction as a priority, the acquisition of Crimea - a vital necessity, and the urgent task of Russian diplomacy, its main vector - turned to the southwest and ensuring the freedom of commercial navigation of Russia in the Black Sea.

With this, the scientist dispelled the myth about the forced actions of the Russian autocracy against the neighboring state and testifies that the division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the annexation of Right-Bank Ukraine were clearly planned and implemented at the most convenient time for Russia. As for the existence in pre-revolutionary and Soviet times of the position formulated by M. S. Solovyov, one can rather agree with another Russian historian D.A. Andreev, who defends the point of view that the autocracy represented a system of power that was unable to exist without the simultaneous generation of a mythical reality [1, p. 97].

The study of scientific works, numerous documentary materials, including archival materials and legal acts, gives grounds for asserting that the formation of the northwestern direction of the foreign policy of the Russian autocracy, in the epicenter of which was Right Bank Ukraine, took place over a long period of time. The beginning of its targeted development was in the 60s of the 18th century, when Russian troops helped the Poles deal with the participants of the Koliivshchyny. On the one hand, it was a manifestation of Russia's allied position, on the other - a sign of direct armed intervention in the internal affairs of a neighboring sovereign state. It was then that the Russians first showed an objective interest in the conditions and specifics of life in Right Bank Ukraine. And with the return of the vector of foreign policy towards the Black Sea, the tsarist thought more and more about the plans and projects of its colonization.

The systematic attention of the official St. Petersburg to the Right Bank gained after the first division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, when, having made efforts to establish Stanislav Augustus on the royal

throne, Russia won the right to take care of the Orthodox population of the Eastern Kresas of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Therefore, the religious factor turned into a means of regular intervention in the internal life of the country and with its help it won supporters among Ukrainians. Such an arrangement was very beneficial for Russians, since "Russians" in the composition of the population of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth made up almost 50 percent, while Poles and Lithuanians - about 38-40 percent [7, p. 9]. Moreover, tsarism got the opportunity to use Right Bank Ukraine as a bridgehead for military and political support for the implementation of the expansionist plans of the Russian Empire in the southern direction.

At the end of the 80s of the 18th century, the autocracy's political plans for Right Bank Ukraine entered a new phase due to several circumstances. First, the situation in Europe was changed by the French Revolution. At the end of the 18th century, the Russian cadet P.N. Milyukov wrote about its real influence on European countries, emphasizing that only Russia was better protected from it [12, p.40]. Secondly, the factors of the internal weakness of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the deep crisis of its state-political system had a great influence on the development of events around Right-Bank Ukraine, due to the weakness of which it did not command significant respect for itself. At first, the neighbors looked at it as a convenient territory for asserting their influence, and later as a kind of inn, in which everyone who has the necessary power can stay and manage [7, p.13]. The powerful neighbors - Austria, Prussia, and Russia managed it as in their provinces [8, p.16]. Thirdly, in Russia's implementation of the annexation of Right Bank Ukraine, the religious background played a special role, ensuring its painlessness [3, p.71]. Fourthly, Austria and Prussia showed a growing interest in the redistribution of spheres of influence, which, in turn, pushed them to an alliance with Russia against the

Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. And, finally, the internal factor of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth played not the least role: King Stanislav was oppressed not only by his neighbors, but also by his subjects [14, p. 208]

Let us emphasize that these plans were conceived at the highest state level. The first thing that Catherine II did was to involve her closest entourage and the military - the favorite of P.A. Zubov, adviser on international affairs O.O. Bezborodyk and Prince N.V. Repnina, who, being in the region, possessed the most information about what was happening in the eastern part of this country and had the opportunity to collect the necessary information and personally make the necessary proposals for the empress. At the second stage, the main content of which consisted of concrete steps to join the region, the circle of participants was expanded at the expense of direct executors and diplomats, including M.V. Kakhovsky and M. M. Krechetnikov, A. Morkov and I. Osterman. In the final phase, priority was given to members [15, p.123] of the secret committee and senior officials and governors-general, endowed with the right of legislative initiative.

This, on the one hand, made the incorporation policy more thoughtful, clear and realistic, on the other hand, its specific implementation became more and more dependent on subjective factors, in particular, on the personal beliefs of viceroys and governors-general. In the second and third stages, the central issues of the political course of tsarism in the Right Bank were: transition from military and political expansion to taking control of the Russian army and administrative consolidation of its territory; integration of Right Bank Ukraine into the imperial political and legal space; consistent use of the large Ukrainian region as a new source of state treasury, significant improvement of the economic situation and expansion of the state's trade and economic opportunities, replenishment of recruits, food

supply of the Russian army, as well as a military and economic bridgehead for further territorial expansion. A common feature of the last two stages was that the development and clarification of plans and tasks were carried out, as they say, on the march, that is, during the implementation of the incorporation policy [4, p. 73]. Rather, Catherine II's plans were more daring than well-thought-out. But in general, it can be stated with full responsibility that the implementation of the incorporation policy in Right-Bank Ukraine was not the result of a coincidence of certain circumstances. It was a conscious, independent, sufficiently motivated choice that reflected Russia's political and economic interests. The autocracy has been preparing for this for several decades and quite thoroughly. The empress, her closest entourage and the highest officials of Russia thought through everything to the smallest detail.

The fact that tsarism had already absorbed Left-Bank Ukraine, changing its vassal dependence to a colonial province, contributed significantly. In other words, he adapted his political course to the large Ukrainian region, transformed into an ordinary part of the Russian Empire. In addition, in St. Petersburg, it was taken into account that in Right Bank Ukraine, after the Cossack organization functioned as a separate political structure during the years 1690-1712, where the Cossack administration was headed by a hetman or commanding hetman, who was assisted in the administration by general officers, the restoration of state order took place on its territory , characteristic of the rest of the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [4, p. 85], which lasted until the end of the 18th century.

The object of Russian expansion in Right Bank Ukraine, which was part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was its geographical location and geopolitical position, extensive, fertile and naturally extremely rich lands [9, p. 11], profitable communication routes and the lack of reliable

roads along the entire perimeter natural boundaries. Even during the Empress's trip to Left Bank Ukraine in 1787, rumors were spread among diplomats that 10 Russian regiments would enter Polish Ukraine. At that time, the border regions were filled with infantry and cavalry and equipped with artillery. It is not by chance that the French ambassador L. F. Segur was alarmed by the fact that the first minister of Russia had so much strength and courage that he could at his discretion pull troops into Poland, without waiting for the autocracy's permission and without notifying other ministers about it [14, p.76]. By displaying splendid regiments and surrounding the empress as she rode through the newly conquered territories led by Potemkin, the governor-general hoped to inflame her pride and inspire her desire and courage to venture on new conquests.

We find confirmation of this in the edition "Economic Statistics of Russia, compiled by V. Androsov", published in 1827, which emphasizes that "in the Kyiv province there are many rivers, but the land is not marshy, black, mixed with clay and sand in various ways and almost fertile everywhere", that the land of Podilska and Volyn provinces is hilly, although it has limestone particles, but it is extremely fertile [17, p.41].

The end of the Russian-Turkish war, the signing of the Jasi Peace Treaty on December 27, 1791 (January 9, 1792) and the return of the 120,000-strong Russian army through Right-Bank Ukraine became an opportunity to take advantage of the weakness of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and to join Right-Bank Ukraine to Russia. About this, Catherine II wrote eloquently in a note to her favorite P. A. Zubov: "After everything is settled in the end, I want Prince N. V. Repnin to go to the main army, gather as many troops as possible - the number of which according to my calculations, it should be up to 130 thousand people - and headed with them to Polish Ukraine. If Austria and Prussia oppose it, then perhaps I will offer them either compensation or partition" [16, p. 259]. From this it

follows that Russia: firstly, had a firm intention to continue expanding the territory of the state at the expense of Right Bank Ukraine; secondly, she chose the most convenient moment for the implementation of the expansionist plan, successfully taking advantage of the weakness of the Commonwealth of Nations and the interest of the allies; thirdly, by deploying a huge army, it left the Poles, not to mention the Ukrainians, any other choice than to be part of the Russian Empire. And the matter is not the book-like nature of the principles that were guided by Catherine II, but the deep insincerity that determined the ultimate goal of the entire campaign, seemingly lofty, but actually narrow both in terms of goals and in the choice of means for its implementation [11, p. 48]. Because one way or another, everything came down to the expansion of the metropolis at the expense of political control and economic benefits from the Right Bank.

This explanation confirms the development of events, starting with the drafting and signing in St. Petersburg on April 27, 1792 of the act of confederation initiated by Russia, the delivery of the declaration on the introduction of troops on May 7(18), 1792, on the authority of the empress, to Lithuanian Chancellor Khreptovich, the publication of the specified document, which played a special role in annexation of Ukrainian lands to the Russian Empire [15], a week later (May 14) F. Pototskyi was proclaimed General Marshal of the Trade Confederation in the Podil city of Torgovytsia, and F.-K. Branytskyi and S. Rzhevuskii to the introduction of the 100,000-strong Russian army of M.V. Kahovskii and M.M. Krechetnikov on the territory of the Right Bank and Lithuania under the slogan of helping to restore old Polish freedoms.

Having occupied Ukraine, Russia did not wait for the official signing of the agreement on the division of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. By the middle of the summer of 1792, specific intentions for the implementation of the expansionist course were developed for him. On August 13, the

personal secretary of the empress and her chief adviser on foreign affairs O. O. Bezborodko [16, p.43] defined the tasks of the autocracy as follows: "we need to sort out only one thing: first of all, what should we appropriate decently?" Second, how to implement it? And thirdly, consider the intentions of our allies with our interests and with the system of common policy" [3]. Less than a month later, on September 4, 1792, Catherine II summoned infantry general M. M. Krechetnikov to the capital and handed him a rescript with specific instructions on how to act in the region in the current situation.

Conclusions. With the annexation of Right-Bank Ukraine, the autocracy faced the task of legitimizing and finally consolidating Russian power and, by extending the imperial administrative-territorial structure to its territory, to strengthen Russian statehood on its territory in order to use its potential in the internal and external policy of the empire. The formation and resolution of the goals and objectives of the military-political support of the imperial incorporation policy were mainly influenced by two circumstances. First, it was a transition period for Right-Bank Ukraine: de jure it became part of the new metropolis, and de facto continued to be under the predominant Polish influence for a long time. The Russian autocracy was fully aware that among the inhabitants of the region, especially among Poles and conscious Ukrainians, a "double" or "multilayered" self-identification prevailed, when, figuratively speaking, the personality was not properly "centered." At the right time, this could cause great fluctuations in public sentiment both toward tsarism and nostalgia for the past. The Russian government was always terribly afraid of the specter of Ukrainian separatism and deeply distrusted Ukrainians [15, p.53]. Any serious socio-political conflict could become a threat not only to the power structures, but also to the newly formed integrity of the Russian state in its southwestern direction. Hence the need to control the socio-political situation and moods

in the Right Bank, forcefully impose one's will and preserve the internal political stability of the region thanks to the military presence.

References:

1. Andreev D. A. (2003). Razmyishleniya amerikanskogo istorika o "stsenariyah vlasti" v tsarskoy Rossii [Reflections of an American Historian on "Scenarios of Power" in Tsarist Russia]. Voprosyi istorii. 10. 97-169 [in Russian]
2. Bekker S. (2004). Rossiya i kontsept imperii [Russia and the concept of empire]. Novaya imperskaya istoriya postsovetskogo prostranstva – New imperial history of the post-Soviet space I. V. Gerasimova (Ed.). Kazan [in Russian]
3. Bovua, Daniel. (2007). Rosiiska vlada i polska shliakhta v Ukraini 1793-1830 rr. [Russian government and Polish gentry in Ukraine 1793-1830]. (Borysiuk Z., Trans). Lviv: Kalvariia. 294 [in Ukrainian].
4. Horobets V. M. (2000). Politychnyi ustroi ukrainskykh zemel druhoi polovyny XVII – XVIII stolit: Hetmanshchyna, Zaporozhzhia, Slobozhanshchyna, Pravoberezhna Ukraina (sproba strukturno-funktsionalnoho analizu [Political system of the Ukrainian lands of the other half of the 17th - 18th centuries: Hetmanate, Zaporozhye, Slobozhanshchyna, Right-bank Ukraine (a test of structural and functional analysis]. Kyiv: Instytut istorii Ukrainy NAN Ukrainy [in Ukrainian]
5. Eliseeva O. I. (2000). Geopoliticheskie proekty G.A. Potemkina [Geopoliticheskie proekty G. A. Potemkina] A. N. Saharov (Ed.) Moskva. 342 [in Russian]
6. Zalizniak L. (2002). Istoriia Polshchi: Vid naidavnishykh chasiv do nashykh dniv [History of Poland: From the last hours to the present day]. Krykun M. (Ed.) Lviv. 242 [in Ukrainian]

7. Ilenko A. K. (1898). Nachalo kontsa Polshi. Vvedenie v istoriyu borby za ob'edinenie Rossii pri imperatritse Ekaterine Velikoy [Beginning of the end of Poland. Introduction to the history of the struggle for the unification of Russia under Empress Catherine the Great] Geisman V. A. (Ed.) Saint Petersburg [in Russian]
8. Kovalenko L. A. (1973). Velyka frantsuzka burzhuazna revoliutsiia i hromadsko-politychni rukhy na Ukraini v kintsi XVIII st. [The great French bourgeois revolution and social and political upheavals in Ukraine in the late 18th century]. Kyiv: [in Ukrainian]
9. Levinskiy V. (1917). Tsarskaya Rossiya i ukrainskiy vopros [Tsarist Russia and the Ukrainian question] Geneva. 120 [in Russian]
10. Lukin N. (1937) Tsarizm i Frantsuzskaya burzhuaznaya revolyutsiya 1789 g. po donesenyam I. M. Simolina [Tsarism and the French bourgeois revolution of 1789 according to the reports of I. M. Simolin] Literaturnoe nasledstvo – Literaturnoe heritage. (Vols. 29-30) Moskva p. 345 [in Russian]
11. Lyutsh A. (1910). Russkiy absolyutizm XVIII veka [Russian absolutism of the 18th century] Itogi XVIII veka v Rossii. Vvedenie v russkuyu istoriyu XIX veka – Results of the 18th century in Russia. Introduction to Russian history of the 19th century Moskva 501 [in Russian]
12. Milyukov P. N. (1903). Ocherki po istorii russkoy kulturyi [Essays on the history of Russian culture] Sankt Peterburg, part 3, issue I, 374 [in Russian]
13. Gorkina, A. P. & Zaytseva, V. M. (Ed.). (1998) Rossiya: Entsiklopedicheskiy spravochnik [Russia: Encyclopedic reference book] Moskva: Drofa. 121 [in Russian]
14. Segyur L.-F. (1989). Zapiski o prebyvanii v Rossii v tsarstvovanie Ekateriny II [Russia: Encyclopedic reference book] Rossiya v XVIII v. glazami inostrantsev – Russia in the 18th century through the eyes of foreigners Leningrad.: Lenizdat. 438 [in Russian]

15. Symonenko R. H. (2005). Bezborodko Oleksandr Andriiovych [Bezborodko Oleksandr Andriiovych] Smolii V. A. (Eds.), Entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy – Encyclopedia of History of Ukraine, (Vols. 1). Kyiv.: Naukova dumka. 212 [in Ukrainian]
16. Stegnyy P. V. (2002). Razdelyi Polshi i diplomatiya Ekaterinyi II. 1772. 1793. 1795 [Partitions of Poland and diplomacy of Catherine II]. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyie otnosheniya. 696 [in Russian]
17. Hozyaystvennaya statistika Rossii, sostavlenneya V. Androsovyim (1827) [Economic statistics of Russia compiled by V. Androsov] (Vols.1-4). Moscow [in Russian]

Citation: Pavlo Khomenko (2023). RIGHT BANK UKRAINE IN THE IMPERIAL EXPANSIONIST POLICY OF RUSSIA BEFORE THE SECOND DIVISION OF THE COMMONWEALTH IN 1793. New York. TK Meganom LLC. Innovative Solutions in Modern Science. 2(57). doi: 10.26886/2414-634X.2(57)2023.2

Copyright: Pavlo Khomenko ©. 2023. This is an openaccess article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) or licensor are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.