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Korneyko O.M.

Postgraduate,

Lesya Ukrainka Eastern European National University

TYPICAL FEATURES OF STALINISM AS THE SPECIFIC FORM OF TOTALITARIAN REGIME

The problem of defining and classifying the anti-democratic state regimes takes a significant place among the issues of theoretical and legal sciences. Today, the most general classification provides the division of this group into two primary forms: the authoritarian and the totalitarian regimes. Nevertheless, none of these forms is homogeneous, and, in the historical perspective, they both had different peculiarities depending on the country in which the regime was implemented. The regimes of some modern states have all the features of authoritarianism. However, only a few states can be characterized as totalitarian today. Therefore, totalitarianism is a more appropriate subject for the retrospective analysis.

The twentieth century was the period of the emergence and the highest development of totalitarianism. Robert Bedeski highlights the following typical features of this state regime: the declarative

identification of a state and a ruling party headed by a charismatic leader; the availability of an official ideology; the use of terrorist and propaganda tools to gain the support of the masses and overcome the dissenting elements; the modernization of technologies and use of scientific achievements to control the individual citizens [1, p. 4]. These are the most common features that can be used to describe all varieties of totalitarian regimes that have existed in the historical perspective.

Different states have undertaken the attempts to introduce the totalitarian regime, including Italy, Germany, and the Soviet Union as the most significant examples. However, only in the latter case, the totalitarian state was able to survive for a sufficiently long period to go through a series of organic and gradual democratic transformations at the end of its existence [1, p. 4]. It makes the Soviet totalitarianism a particularly interesting subject of study. It has reached the anti-democratic peak during the reign of Joseph Stalin, through which this period of totalitarian development of the Soviet state regime is usually referred to as «Stalinism».

Stalinism has not been homogeneous, developing throughout the whole period of its existence. However, the scientists distinguish six major features that were inherent in it throughout its development. They include:

- a highly centralized economy with the state ownership of all the key facilities;
- formation of bureaucracy as a closed social group of privileged elites;
- political control over the artistic and cultural spheres;
- total politicization of all aspects of human life;
- personal dictatorship built on repression and use of secret police;
- conservative ideology that contradicts the previous revolutionary ideas while simultaneously declaring their supremacy in determining the strategy of the state development [3, p. 6].

Another approach to Stalinism in the general context of the totalitarian regimes provides a slightly different classification of its

typical features. In this case, the features are more detailed and tied to the concrete realities of life during the reign of Joseph Stalin. They include the following items:

- power monopoly of the Bolshevik Party supported by a strong bureaucratic mechanism;
- personal cult of Joseph Stalin;
- complete subordination of all social and cultural institutions to the state;
- an absence of a legal opposition and intolerance to the dissenting elements;
- destruction of democratic institutions and leveling up of the role of individual councils and public organizations;
- creation of a powerful repressive apparatus.
- a policy of denationalization of the Soviet republics [2, p. 110].

It is evident that the second classification is more specific. At the same time, it includes a number of aspects that were typical to the previous forms of the Soviet state regime, such as the party's power monopoly and the lack of legal opposition. Therefore, only some of these features can be identified as defining to Stalinism. Based on the analysis and synthesis of the given classifications, it is possible to outline the following distinguishing features of Stalinism:

- centralized and total power of the ruling elite over the public and private spheres of human lives;
- the existence of a powerful bureaucratic mechanism, posed by a closed social group with numerous privileges;
- the personal dictatorship of Joseph Stalin and the availability of the cult of his person, supported by propaganda and extensive repressive mechanism;
- full subordination of any citizens' representative formations to the party authorities and lack of opportunities for the citizens to influence the state;
- intolerance to the dissenting citizens, utilization of force and terrorist methods against them;

– denationalization of the Soviet republics through their forceful assimilation with the nominal (Russian) culture.

This list of characteristics shows that Stalinism simultaneously lies within the criteria defining the totalitarian regime (considering its identity with the typical features of totalitarianism listed at the beginning of this work) and has the sufficient amount of distinctive elements to stand out against the generalized background as its separate sub-type. Summing up the above, although it is commonly accepted to refer to the Soviet regime as the generalized “totalitarian” one, it had gone through numerous stages, which differed significantly from one another. Stalinism was the totalitarian peak of the Soviet regime. The presence of specific features and methods of exercising the state power which characterized the period of its domination demonstrates the impossibility to clearly generalize the features of totalitarianism without taking into account the specific historical forms that it gained.

References:

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