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НАПОЛЕОНОВСКАЯ ЭПОХА В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОМ ДИСКУРСЕ СОВРЕМЕННОЙ ФРАНЦИИ¹

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: политический дискурс; образ Наполеона; общественное сознание; политическая сфера; СМИ.

АННОТАЦИЯ. Автор предпринял попытку представить трансформацию образа наполеоновской эпохи в политическом и историческом дискурсе современной Франции. Стремление французских властей через обращение к категориям прошлого обосновать авторитарные методы руководства вызывает, как правило, резкое противодействие со стороны общественности. Автор приходит к выводу о том, что образ Наполеона занимает знаковое место в политическом дискурсе Франции, являя собой некий символический поиск образца совершенной властной модели. Однако трансформация облика французского императора на разных этапах развития режима V республики демонстрирует, что использование в интересах власти образа исторического лица или исторического события может привести к совершенно непредсказуемым результатам. Так, исторические мифы о Наполеоне в политическом поле современной Франции способствуют пробуждению в обществе чувства патриотизма лишь применительно к сфере международных отношений.

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NAPOLEONIC ERA IN THE POLITICAL DISCOURSE OF MODERN FRANCE

KEYWORDS: political discourse; image of Napoleon; social conscience; political field; mass media.

ABSTRACT. The author attempts to present the transformation of the image of Napoleonic era in the political discourse of modern France, based on mass media materials. The tendency of the French authorities to justify the authoritarian leadership by referring to the categories of the past usually brings about strong opposition from the public. The author comes to the conclusion that Napoleon's image occupies a significant position in the political discourse of France, being a certain symbol of search of a form of perfect government model. But the transformation of the image of the French emperor at different stages of development of the Fifth Republic shows that use of the image of a historical person or a historical event for the benefit of the power can lead to absolutely unpredictable results. Thus, historical myths about Napoleon in the political space of modern France stimulate the awakening in the society of the feeling of patriotism only in reference to the sphere of the international relations.

The emergence of postmodernism was largely due to the changes that appeared in the relationship between sciences and other forms of social conscience, which are not directly connected with science, which, at the same time, gave rise to many modern trends in Humanities. Historic political discourse is among them. The main elements of the latter are "the discourse of the past", "historic politics" and "memory politics". The main problem, which is in the spotlight of all these new trends of present and past studies, is the issue dealing with the ways authorities and society, which are often confront each other, affect the transformation of the images of the past.

One of the most important mean of representation of authorities is the use of historic symbols as the essential part of political discourse. This kind of semantic method helps the construction of definite historic ideas in the social conscience, which are usually aimed at the formation of patriotism. However, turning to

the symbols of past for the society consolidation, the authorities create the so called "analogy trap" for themselves. As soon as a political leader or political framework make a mistake in their work, analogy with the past brings this blunder in exaggerated form the public consciousness that immediately creates a kind of "counter-discourse". Thus, in response to recent events in Ukraine in French society has appeared the view that the position of European countries towards Russia will lead the European Union to "Berezina" [31]. In this peculiar way mass media tries to warn the country authorities from political decision-making that, in its time, led the Empire of Napoleon I to disaster.

The image of the great French Emperor plays an important role in the politics of modern France, being the peculiar marker of the "greatness" of a certain leader. The design process of political discourse, based on the symbolism of the Napoleonic era, beginning with the period of July Monarchy until the present days, for French leaders became the special mean of forming an image the power in the public mind. At critical moments in French

¹ Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке Российского научного фонда (проект № 16-18-10041).

history the image of Napoleon became the way of social consolidation and even the revival of governmental institution. One of these crises took place after World War II, when France had to make its political choice. After the series of desperate actions the French regained "the emperor" in the person of President Charles de Gaulle, who established the the Fifth Republic regime and the tradition of "political field" of modern France. In his presidential career de Gaulle focused on the French national consolidation on the basis of historical symbols. He often referred to the actions of his predecessor - Napoleon I, while making important decisions. He attempted to gain the trust of the society by inducing historical analogies in its conscious. The society itself, apparently, at that time shared his views and believed in the power of the "reborn emperor".

Trying to bring back the sense of pride in the country to the French, de Gaulle was into the idea of revival of France as a key player on the political arena. In his aspiration to regain the leading role for France in European affairs, this time through the process of European integration, he used to say: "Napoleon sought national independence through war, and we could achieve this goal through the peace." [13] The president expressed his view on the European unification in his famous speech about "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" [11]. He saw a kind of the alternative to NATO in the upcoming European political union. In the development of European integration the French president relied primarily on the development and extension of relations with the FRG and the USSR.

De Gaulle succeeded in serious rapprochement with West Germany and, to a certain extent - with the USSR. As a result, the French society itself began to show increasing interest in the history of relations between France and the peoples of those countries. In these years the serious monograph by S. Corbet came out. It was dedicated to the French ideas about Russia [5]. This book became a major milestone on the difficult path to searching of understanding between two nations. In this regard the French also started to show considerable interest to the war of 1812. De Gaulle himself, referring the theme of Napoleonic wars, acknowledged the following: "Napoleon attacked Alexander, and it was the grossest mistake he had ever made: nothing urged to such actions. This war has become the beginning of our decline"[14]. Images of the Russian campaign of 1812, having returned to the nationwide cycle of events, gradually began to be introduced into the communicative memory of the French as a symbol of life crisis. In 1962, the French heard the song "Berezina" by P. Peret, in which the image of river was the em-

bodiment of different life problems. De Gaulle's use of the Napoleonic era images led to the numerous attempts to draw the analogies between the Gaullism, as the political movement, and the Bonapartism; such comparisons have become a tradition for the French political thought [4].

There were also the examples of some allusions to the political careers of Charles de Gaulle and Napoleon. Numerous articles on comparing the circumstances of de Gaulle's coming to power in 1958 and the 18 Brumaire of Napoleon Bonaparte, as well as the coup of 1851-1852, carried out by Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte [15], appeared in the magazines. In 1859 the book by A. Oliver came out. In this book the author called the 18 brumaire the beginning of the Great France creation, directly drawing the parallels with the modern days [24]. The same topic was further developed by the Historian Jean-Luke Dyubretton, who referred to the issue of formation of Napoleon cult in France in 1815-1848. The author suggested that the political evolution that took place in those years in France contributed to the formation of the Napoleonic legend [20]. According to him, the image of Napoleon helped King Louis Philippe to stabilize the political situation for a while. However, in a few years, also using the memory of the Emperor, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte carried out a coup and restored the Empire. Similar research analogies justified de Gaulle's desire to conduct authoritarian policy. However, the President was caught in a "memory trap", just like the Emperor Napoleon III at his time, which eventually led him to resigning. Despite that outcome of de Gaulle's presidency, the reference to the Napoleonic legend would continue to be one of the stable elements in the "political field" of V republic.

French President Georges Pompidou, who proclaimed himself the successor of de Gaulle's policy, continued the tradition of exploitation memory of Napoleon. The beginning of Pompidou's presidential term in 1969 fell on the Great Emperor's anniversary. The great festivities in Ajaccio, Napoleon's hometown, were held at the initiative of the French president. In public speeches, which Pompidou gave at the anniversary celebrations, he repeatedly pointed out the nation's consolidation based on the idea of the greatness of France, as the main achievement of Napoleon's policy [6]. It should be noted that the Pompidou, unlike de Gaulle, referred only to the images of Emperor's foreign policy, considering the continuation of European integration to be his primary political task. In his articles, the 19th French president heroized the Napoleonic Wars, which, in his opinion, were intended to establish peace and ensure prosperity for the peoples of Eu-

rope. Pompidou noted that, despite the tragic retreat of the Grand Army from Russia, Napoleon remains to be a symbol of the French greatness, the man who laid the basic principles of international politics [26].

Following Pompidou, the 20th president of France V. Giscard d'Estaing, whose presidency coincided with the period of severe economic crisis, unlike his predecessors, appeared to be stingier on the generation of historical allusions.

At the turn of the 70-80s great changes took place in Europe, which affected the intellectual life of France and predetermined the new stage of transformation of Napoleon's image in the public mind. The process of "deconstruction" of myths began in the historic science; also there appeared the desire to "overcome the past." The emergence of a new conception of historical events as the product of memory, created under the influence of the state and the individual social groups contributed to the displacement of the center of the formation of images of the past from government structures to the public ones. The disappearance of the great emperor as the ideal of power from the "political field" happened during the presidency of Socialist Francois Mitterrand.

Despite the fact that the country's leadership headed by Mitterrand distanced itself from the historical analogies, typical of the previous time, society didn't lose hope for a "resurrection of Napoleon." In the image of Mitterrand Frenchmen tried to catch the traits that would indicate a "reincarnation" of the great emperor. In search of those similarities public found that they both had the activist named Savary in their circle, the president and the emperor's wives' names were Marie-Louise, and that both politicians were beckoned by the image of Egypt [16]. The creation of the European Union as the embodiment of the Napoleonic idea of United Europe encouraged the updating of First Empire Images in the public conscious. French president himself, without referring to the activities of the emperor, had high hopes for a united Europe stating that "France is our country and Europe is our future" [9].

Mitterrand's work convinced the French that he was intended to continue the policy of Napoleon. The French actor P. Sebastien tried to express such an idea in the musical skit "From Napoleon to Mitterrand", which became extremely popular. At the beginning of the performance Napoleon, who found himself on the St. Helena Island, appeared before the audience. He began with sharing his dreams of rebuilding whole Paris, starting with Louvre, with the audience. But then, realizing that his age was almost over, felt sorry that he would

not be able to do so. Suddenly Napoleon transformed into Mitterrand and completed what the French emperor had dreamed of - rebuilt Louvre erecting before him the awkward Egyptian pyramid [10]. This sketch shows how a development of "public myth" about the "president-emperor", uncontrolled by the government, led to the appearance of the first signs of "contra-discourse", which was expressed through the universal language of criticism of the ruling structures.

Media reports predicting the imminent "Berezina" for socialists in the next presidential election became the manifestation of this "public contra-discourse" [21]. Indeed, in 1995 there was a failure of socialists and Jacques Chirac became the next head of France. During his presidency the country tried to return to the Gaullist policy. Society, feeling the revival of traditions of de Gaulle, declared Chirac's victory as "Marengo" and "Austerlitz" [12]. Many newspapers published images of Chirac as the French emperor.

During this period, the Napoleonic era symbols acquire new significance not only in a "public myth", but also in "political discourse." Chirac, focusing the principles of democracy in domestic policy, referred to the period of the Hundred Days of Napoleon as an example of liberalism while maintaining a strong "power vertical". Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin tried to make a scientific rationale of this idea by publishing a study on the Hundred Days of Napoleon [29]. The author came to the conclusion that during the first period of the reign the emperor was in a state of exhilaration of power, and the pursuit of authoritarianism led him to failure. Criticizing such political ambitions of Napoleon, de Villepin expressed full approval and solidarity with the democratic endeavors, which appeared during the Hundred Days.

De Villepin stated that the triumph of democracy principles in those 100 days French emperor reign desperately needed a strong alliance of government and society. This problem was raised in de Villepin's next book "Le cri de la gargouille" [30]. Due to this book, de Villepin became the embodiment of the collision between the image of intellectual and the image of politician in one person. The author could not keep from criticism of the strengthening of the "vertical of power" that was observed during the reign of the previous French presidents. He proposed active participation of intellectuals in politics, as the main method of authoritarianism prevention.

The anniversary of the battle of Austerlitz fell on the period of Chirac's presidency in 2005. In his public speeches the president repeatedly recalled this event, stating that this victory had been the beginning of the modern

France history. The return of Napoleonic era images to the "political field" caused the protest of the French society. Thus, ethnic minorities were outraged by the fact that the government of Chirac declaring a policy of democratization and multiculturalism, at the same time used the cult of the ruler who had enslaved entire nations [17]. The peak of this discussion fell precisely on the Battle of Austerlitz anniversary celebration. So, taking into account the mood of national minorities, the government decided to distance from conducting anniversary events.

President's desire to maneuver between national minorities and indigenous French population at the expense of the unified history caused protest of intellectual stratum of society. On the rebound of discontent of the state policy in 2005 the organization "Freedom of history" was established, on whose behalf Pierre Nora condemned the government for ignoring such a significant event in the history of France, as the victory at Austerlitz [19]. The intellectuals' work, which was aimed at criticizing the government, influenced the revival of "public contra - discourse", which was expressed in the "Berezina" prophecy, this time - for Chirac [7].

Having faced such a phenomenon, the President stopped appealing to allusions of the Napoleonic era as the variant of national consolidation; this led to the displacement of the emperor's image from the "political field" to the field of discussions on the international relations. In an effort to support the idea of France's leading role in the European Union, Chirac repeatedly stressed that Napoleon initially had been able to realize the idea of European unity. To commemorate the anniversary of signing the Franco-German Treaty in 1963 a very symbolic place was chosen - Hall of Military Fame in Versailles, which was decorated with paintings depicting campaigns and battles of Napoleon. Focusing on the principles of Gaullist foreign policy, Chirac aimed at establishing of strong ties with Germany and Russia. At the same time, his attitude towards the U.S. was more restrained. No wonder that when the British government supported the American president in the holding of military operations in Iraq, the French leadership openly demonstrated its negative attitude towards this issue. However, Chirac was well aware that in order to strengthen the European Union it's necessary to maintain friendly relations with Britain. The Chirac's visit of the United Kingdom in 2005 became the symbol of it. During this visit the famous meetings with the British Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister T. Blair were carried out. The British government, demonstrating the friendly feelings towards the French, even renamed Hall Waterloo at Wind-

sor Castle to the Music room, in order not to remind of the past rivalry and hostility between the two nations [2].

The revival of the Great Emperor Cult in the field of French domestic and foreign policy was most clearly visible during the reign of the next president - Nicolas Sarkozy, who actively appealed to the memory of Napoleon in order to create his own image and to justify his actions in European politics [27]. Already during the procedure inauguration Sarkozy, having appeared before the Parisians to the sound of "Marengo", made it clear that if he did not claim the role of Napoleon, then at least for the role of his successor. In an effort to consolidate the various political forces of France, the president in his public speeches became repeatedly referring to the words which were allegedly uttered by Napoleon: "In the history of France I accept everything from Clovis to the Committee of Public Safety". However, the result of Sarkozy's "historical demarches" was quite unexpected. The French public, reviving the analogy with the rule of Napoleon, tried to convince Sarkozy that he would not be able to reach the political level of the French emperor. A characterizing feature of the "public discourse" at this period was the comparing of negative traits of Emperor's and President Sarkozy's policies (arrogance towards the Parisian elite, the desire to control the media, etc.). This period was a notable milestone in the formation of "public myth" about Napoleon that (myth) now was focused not on the glorification of the ruler but on his criticism. One can assume that this process was connected primarily with increased activity of intellectuals who began to consider any government intervention in history as an attempt to destroy the united memory of the nation.

First to respond to the presidential "imperial" ambitions was the intellectual community, who was trying to convey a fear of the authoritarianism revival to the public. Journalist Alan Duronell, who devoted a monograph "Consular march" to the comparison the of Napoleon's and Sarkozy's policies, came to the conclusion that sarcozyzme could be called a modern version of Bonapartism, which had already exhausted its political potential. In 2008, a group of French historians and political scientists published a book "History of France through Nicolas Sarkozy's eyes" [8], which received wide response among the French public. The authors analyzed all the speeches given by Nicolas Sarkozy during his election campaign, which lasted from September 3, 2006 to May 6, 2007, and ended, as is know, with his election as President of the French Republic. In the future president's speeches the authors identified the most frequently mentioned historical figures and events, and on this basis the com-

piled a kind of a "critical dictionary." Of course, among the articles there was one entitled "Napoleon". The Compilers of "Critical Dictionary" suspected Sarkozy in not only the propensity to Bonapartism, but also to monarchism. Anyway, that is how they interpreted his constant references to the kings of France, as the creators of the French nation. In general, the intellectuals, having declared the explicit "monarchical" aspirations in Sarkozy's attempts to strengthen the "vertical of power", created the conditions for activating the "public contradiscourse", also expressing itself in the appearance of the image of the French president in the regalia of Napoleon and with a sonorous name "Nicolas Bonaparte" [28].

It should be noted that the use of the Napoleon's image in Sarkozy's foreign policy aspirations, unlike the domestic political field, met with approval in the intellectual community [18]. Supporting the president in strengthening of the EU policy, writers and historians turned to the First Empire as a kind of prototype of such an organization. They also noted that if Napoleon had not "stuck" in the snows of Russia, France still would have controlled the world. The French president's «overturned to the past" dreams of Napoleon's victory in 1812 were expressed by the former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in his book "The victory of the Grand Army." The author's key thought was that if Napoleon had not stayed in Moscow for such a long time, he could have won over Russia and would have created a more solid European Union [1].

European idea as the main force of Napoleon's policy was presented in the famous novel by Max Gallo. He, following many historians, expressed the conviction that in 1812 Napoleon was defeated only by "Russian Winter". Based on the Halo's novel the director Yves Shimano made the film "Napoleon", which instantly became widely known and popular in France and worldwide. The image of Napoleon, presented in the film, infused fear, respect and compassion at the same time. According to the plot, Napoleon, triggering off another war, only aimed at strengthening the France's position in the world and uniting whole Europe around it. In this regard, the words uttered by the man, who was close to the Emperor, the grand equerry A. Caulaincourt on the eve of the campaign against Russia are very characteristic: "The whole of Europe became French!" This European idyll was destroyed by the Russian campaign in 1812, which led to the death of the Grand Army. With the help of such reminders French intellectuals and cultural figures tried to somehow warn the president: the well-being of the European space friendly relations with Russia were required. However, foreign policy

moves by President Sarkozy showed his projects of a different kind.

Focusing on the Franco-German interests, Sarkozy was forced to strengthen the military and political, and sometimes economic ties with the U.S., weakening the relationship with Russia. Such a situation once again forced the French public apply to the images of the Russian campaign of Napoleon. So Sarkozy's statement about the withdrawal of French troops from Afghanistan, made in 2011, led to the emergence of a series of cartoons. One of them was in the form of the story, reminiscent of Napoleon's retreat from Russia with a brief explanation: "The story continues." In media each Sarkozy's failing political step was accompanied with the word "Berezina". For example, in 2007 when Sarkozy took an active part in the creation of the European Constitution, newspapers flashed with spiteful remarks: French ruler promises to save the Europeans on the Berezina again. The crisis of the European Union, flared up in 2012, also reminded the European community Russian campaign of 1812 [32].

During the hot elections held in France in May 2012, a French newspaper noticed that someone from the candidates had to go through "Berezina" [3]. Socialist F. Hollande won. But this time it did not go without the analogies with the era of Napoleon. From the first days of the reign for many French Hollande started to resemble passive Louis XVIII, and this led to the emergence of a comparison of 2012 elections with "Waterloo" for the whole France in the "public discourse" [22].

Unlike his predecessors, Hollande does not use images of the past to justify his political actions. Society, however, commenting on the president's actions, continues, as before, to revive historical stereotyped symbols. Thus, during the Hollande's reign he is being predicted the upcoming "Berezina" [25]. Sometimes it seems that today the image of Napoleon has disappeared from the "political discourse." Famous politician Lionel Jospin some time ago even predicted "oblivion" of memory of the Emperor in the minds of the French (Lionel Jospin: "Napoléon, quel désastre !" // URL: <http://bibliobs.nouvelobs.com/essais/20140314.OBS9906/lionel-jospin-napoleon-quel-desastre.html> (08.06.2014)). But is that true?

In 2017, according to the French media, there will be two "Napoléons" in the presidential race: Dominique de Villepin and Nicolas Sarkozy. Perhaps it will be the era of "Hundred Days" and the image of Napoleon will acquire new significance in the political and public discourse.

Thus, the image of Napoleon occupies a symbolic place in the political discourse in France, being a kind of symbolic search for the

perfect specimen of the power model. However, the transformation of the French emperor image at the different stages of development of the republic regime V demonstrates that the use of the image of the historical person or historical event for the benefit of power can lead to unpredictable consequences. Thus, historical myths about Napoleon in the political field of modern France promotes awakening of pat-

riotism in society only can be applied to the sphere of international relations.

When the authorities try to justify authoritarian methods, using the categories of the past, it leads to the emergence of public contra discourse. In any case, both the government and society in France use similar allegorical symbols - images Napoleonic era, in order to identify ways of further development.

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