

UDC 32

THE STATUS OF NOVOROSSIYA

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Abstract. *The Donetsk People`s Republic and the Lugansk People`s Republic very recently separated from the Ukraine, declared the independence and formed the Union of the People`s Republic Novorossiya. The union name means the declared continuity from the same-name historical region of the former Russian Empire, which included the most part of Donbass. The issue of further status determination of Novorossiya is very debatable: whether there will be it independent or will return in the Ukraine, or will be a part of the Russian Federation as the new subject. The author will try to predict the various scenarios how events may develop in this region and to allocate their strengths and weaknesses in the present article.*

Keywords: *Novorossiya, Central Rada, Ukrainian National Republic, preservation of status quo, federalization of Ukraine, declaration of independence, principle of equality and national self-determination, principle of territorial integrity, restoration of historical justice.*

In view of the known events the problem of Novorossiya`s status defining is highly topical at the moment. In fact, the large part of former Ukraine`s territory, namely the Donetsk and the Lugansk oblasts, populated with seven million people, came apart and consolidated into Federal State of Novorossiya. Kiev is not willing to hand over its territories and continues shelling civilian areas. A much debated question is a future status of Novorossiya, and whether it will expand its territories. This paper discusses some aspects of the past, the present and the possible future of the Novorossiya region.

Novorossiya is initially described as a historical area that covers parts of today`s territories of Russia and Ukraine. It used to be part of the Russian Empire up to the 1917. Novorossiya is the territories of the northern Black Sea Coast and Zaporozhye. Most of the Novorossiya`s territories were conquered under the rule of Catherine the Great during the second half of the 18th century.

The Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774 brought southern Ukraine within the orbit of the Russian Empire. Under the Kuciuk Kaynarca Treaty Russia gained the territory between the Dnieper and the Southern Bug. Catherine the Great was not satisfied with the Kuciuk Kaynarca Peace Treaty, since she desired further expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the Crimean Khanate was annexed in 1783.

However, the Russo-Turkish War of 1787–1791 proved to be less advantageous. The reorganized Ottoman army offered more effective resistance. In 1791 the Russian Empire annexed territories between the Southern Bug and the Dniester. In 1812 Russia seized southern Bessarabia.

On May 7, 1775 under the Empress Catherine`s direct order, the Zaporozhian Sich was to be destroyed and the Russian Empire established absolute control over its territory. Consequently, the newly incorporated region (Novorossiya) has become known as the Novorossiysk Governorate.

Thus, Novorossiya was a part of the Russian Empire up to its crumbling. It is noteworthy, that before the October Revolution in Russia such a country as Ukraine did not exist. The question to be posed is when and why Russia has lost its Novorossiya region.

After the February Revolution in Russia a major event took place in Ukraine: the Society of Ukrainian Progressionists has founded the Central Council (Central Rada) which later became the revolutionary parliament of Ukraine. On June 10, 1917 the Rada published its first declaration of autonomy and elected the General Secretariat, autonomous government of Ukraine. Russian Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky recognized the regional autonomy of the Central Rada as well as its governing body, limiting its powers to five guberniyas: Volyn Governorate, Kiev Governorate, Podolie Governorate, Chernigov Governorate and Poltava Governorate. So, during the first attempts of the Central Rada to declare its independence it did not even aspire to take the Novorossiya region under control.

Following the October Revolution many governments were formed in Ukraine. Ukrainian People`s Republic with the Central Council as a governing body proclaimed independence when Bolsheviks took over Provisional Government. The Bolsheviks of Ukraine asserted the government of the Ukrainian People`s Republic outlawed and declared the Ukrainian People`s Republic of Soviets which spread its influence almost to the whole Novorossiya. On January 25, 1918, the Central Rada issued its Fourth Universal, breaking ties with Bolshevik Russia and proclaiming a sovereign Ukrainian state that was not recognized by the Russian government.

Following two revolutions Russia was torn by the internal strife between the white and the red forces. Furthermore, Russia participated in World War I. Ordinary people were tired of war, they desired to stop it. So, Bolsheviks had to sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty in order to remain in power. Under this treaty Ukraine was recognized as a sovereign country and Russia lost control in Ukraine, including Novorossiya. Germany and Austria-Hungary occupied the territories of modern Ukraine and provided military protection in return for food supply. We may conclude that Ukrain-

ian nationhood was formed due to external influence. Russian weakness became an impetus to the formation of Ukrainian independence.

Today Novorossiia means the confederation of the two self-proclaimed states: the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic within the national boundaries of the Ukraine. Currently neither the Federal state of Novorossiia nor the two above mentioned republics are internationally recognized except for the latter two which are recognized by the South Ossetia only which has limited recognition itself. Novorossiia is meant to be a union of independent states with the right of secession and the right of other states' entry. Pavel Gubarev, the head of the People's Militia, said that eight oblasts (including Odessa, Nikolaev, Kherson, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporozhye) will become parts of the Federal state of Novorossiia through referendums.

There are four scenarios of how events in Novorossiia may develop and how Russia may act. The first one is maintaining the status quo. In accordance with this scenario Russia will opt for non-interference policy after the reunion with the Crimea and accept both current Ukrainian government and its unitary system. One of the advantages of this scheme is that in this case both the USA and the EU will have to revise their policy of imposing further sanctions to avoid political and economic overstrain. But at the same time, it has a lot of disadvantages. Disavowal to protect the Russian-speaking population of Novorossiia will undermine Russia's authority in this region, Russia will be cut off Transnistria and Gagauzia and the population of south-eastern Ukraine is to be subjected to further repression. Moreover, if this scenario takes place, the chances are that NATO enhancement reaches our borders too closely. So, from the author's point of view, status quo is absolutely unlikely to be maintained since it contradicts the political line of conduct which has been already chosen by the Russian Government.

The second scheme is Ukraine's federalization. This scenario corresponds to the so-called Lavrov's plan to resolve the conflict in Ukraine. This plan involves amending a constitution to proclaim Ukraine a neutral country that will never join NATO forces as well as granting extensive authority to the regions. But as Sergey Lavrov has recently said, Kiev leaders appear to be strongly resistant to Moscow solution. Firstly, the legal field will help to stop the escalation of the crisis. Secondly, Ukraine will be fully responsible for all the economic consequences in the light of political uncertainty. And the minus is the maximization of non-violent pressure on the region on the part of Kiev and the West through mass media.

As far as the next two scenarios are concerned, by the term *Novorossiia* the author means not only the Lugansk and the Donetsk People's Republics, but the whole south-eastern Ukraine, including the eight oblasts from Lugansk to Odessa. The author is deeply convinced that at the moment it is not expedient for the two republics to join Russia because of the risk of losing other regions of southern Ukraine.

The third scenario includes Novorossiia's declaration of independence and establishing closer ties with Russia. On the one hand, Russia will expand its geopolitical influence without border's redrawing. On the other hand, we should not discount the possibility of military clashes between Kiev, supported by the West and Novorossiia, backed by Russia. It may result in a full-scale confrontation. Furthermore, economic pressure on the part of Europe and America will be immensely increased. So, in our view, this scenario may take place only as an intermediate stage before Novorossiia's reunion with Russia since it is difficult to imagine Novorossiia region separately existing with the population exceeding 19 million people.

And the fourth scenario means Novorossiia's reunification with Russia namely entering the Russian Federation as a new subject following appropriate procedures. No doubt, Russia will be subjected to extreme pressure on the part of America and Europe and it will be of a long-term nature. As a matter of fact, Russia will have to restore the infrastructure of the regions exposed to shelling from Kiev. Economic situation in the country will deteriorate and it will have a negative impact on society's welfare. The author thinks the advantages of this scenario outweigh the disadvantages. Firstly, Russia will extend its territories. Secondly, the number of the population will increase. The author supposes that the most appropriate way of solving the Novorossiia crisis is to break up from Ukraine and start a natural process of Novorossiia's integration with Russia.

How can we justify the separation of Ukraine's significant part given the international law? International law has two contradicting principles: the right of the nations for self-determination and territorial integrity. None of the principles is relevant in this case. As far as self-determination is concerned, we cannot assert that the native-born Novorossiia's population is a nation. Territorial integrity of Ukraine has become absolute utopia since there are thresholds that have already been stepped over by the Ukrainian Government, which subjected south-eastern regions of the country to extensive shelling. In the author's view, a historical justice must prevail and Novorossiia must integrate with Russia.

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СТАТУС НОВОРОССИИ

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Аннотация. *Совсем недавно Донецкая и Луганская народные республики отделились от Украины, провозгласили свою независимость и образовали Союз народных республик Новороссия. Название союза подразумевает заявленную преемственность от одноимённого исторического региона бывшей Российской империи, в пределы которого входила в том числе и большая часть Донбасса. Весьма дискуссионным является вопрос определения дальнейшего статуса Новороссии: останется ли она независимой или вернется в состав Украины, или вообще войдет в состав Российской Федерации в качестве нового субъекта. В данной статье автор попытается спрогнозировать всевозможные сценарии развития событий в этом регионе и выделить их слабые и сильные стороны.*

Ключевые слова: *Новороссия, Центральная Рада, Украинская Народная Республика, сохранение status quo, федерализация Украины, провозглашение независимости, принцип равноправия и самоопределения народов, принцип территориальной целостности, восстановление исторической справедливости.*