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Original article



### Ukrainianisation in the Azov-Black Sea Region in the 1920s – early 1930s: Motives, Factors, Results

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#### Abstract

**Introduction.** The article deals with the Ukrainianisation, a political campaign carried out in 1923–1932 in certain areas of Soviet Russia where communities of Ukrainian natives lived. In particular, Ukrainianisation reached a wide scale in the Azov-Black Sea region, especially in the Don, Kuban and Stavropol regions. The relevance of this topic is conditioned not only by the insufficient coverage of a number of its aspects in the scientific literature, but also by the unfolding of momentous events in the modern world, an indispensable condition for understanding and predicting which is an appeal to historical precedents and parallels. The aim of the article is to identify the characteristics and features of Ukrainianisation in the Azov-Black Sea region, the attitude of the population to it, and the reasons for its collapse.

**Materials and methods.** The publication is based on archival and published documents, as well as statistical materials. Leading research methods: chronological, historical-genetic, synchronisation method.

**Results.** Ukrainianisation was an attempt at nation-building in a multi-ethnic region and was aimed at consolidating Soviet power in the Azov-Black Sea region. Some part of the Azov-Black Sea population supported Ukrainianisation, but the bulk of the population opposed this policy, rightly perceiving it as a set of discriminatory measures that infringed on the interests of speakers of the Russian language. By the early 1930s, the Bolsheviks realised the conflictogenic nature of Ukrainianisation, which generated inter-ethnic tensions and provoked the growth of nationalism, chauvinism and separatism. In December 1932, this political campaign in the Azov-Black Sea region was curtailed, its results were liquidated, and its active supporters and implementers were repressed.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** Ukrainianisation as a political campaign of 1923–1932 unfolded in some areas of Soviet Russia, reaching a wide scale in the Azov-Black Sea region, the Don, Kuban and Stavropol. The characteristics and features of Ukrainianisation in the Azov-Black Sea region, the attitude of the population to it, the reasons under the influence of which it was stopped are revealed. The article emphasised the significance of the study of these issues in modern conditions.

**Keywords:** Azov-Black Sea region, Bolsheviks, Cossacks, indigenization, collectivisation, North Caucasus region, Ukraine, Ukrainianisation

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Научная статья

### Украинизация в Азово-Черноморском регионе в 1920-х – начале 1930-х гг.: мотивы, факторы, результаты

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#### Аннотация

**Введение.** Статья посвящена рассмотрению украинизации – политической кампании, осуществлявшейся в 1923–1932 гг. в отдельных районах Советской России, где наличествовали общины выходцев с Украины. В том

числе украинизация достигла широких масштабов в Азово-Черноморском регионе, в особенности на Дону, Кубани и Ставрополье. Актуальность данной темы обусловлена не только недостаточным освещением ряда ее аспектов в научной литературе, но и разворачивающимися в современном мире судьбоносными событиями, неперенным условием осмысления и прогнозирования которых является обращение к историческим прецедентам и параллелям. Цель статьи – выявить характеристики и особенности украинизации в Азово-Черноморье, отношение к ней населения, причины её свертывания.

**Материалы и методы.** Публикация основана на архивных и опубликованных документах, а также материалах статистики. Ведущие методы исследования: хронологический, историко-генетический, метод синхронизации.

**Результаты исследования.** Украинизация представляла собой попытку нациестроительства в полиэтничном регионе и преследовала цель упрочения советской власти в Азово-Черноморье. Некоторая часть населения Азово-Черноморья украинизацию поддержала, но основная масса жителей выступила против этой политики, правомерно воспринимая её как комплекс дискриминационных мер, ущемлявших интересы носителей русского языка. К началу 1930-х гг. большевики осознали конфликтогенный характер украинизации, которая порождала межнациональную напряженность и провоцировала рост национализма, шовинизма и сепаратизма. В декабре 1932 г. эта политическая кампания в Азово-Черноморье была свернута, ее результаты ликвидированы, активные сторонники и реализаторы – репрессированы.

**Обсуждение и заключение.** Украинизация как политическая кампания 1923–1932 гг. развернулась в отдельных районах Советской России, достигнув широких масштабов в Азово-Черноморском регионе, на Дону, Кубани и Ставрополье. Выявлены характеристики и особенности украинизации в Азово-Черноморье, отношение к ней населения, причины под влиянием которых она была прекращена. Подчеркнута значимость исследования данных вопросов в современных условиях.

**Ключевые слова:** Азово-Черноморский регион, большевики, казачество, коренизация, коллективизация, Северо-Кавказский край, Украина, украинизация

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**Introduction.** In the 1920s and early 1930s, the Soviet Union pursued a policy of indigenization, which was expressed in the Communist Party's demonstrative attention to the interests and needs of national minorities. In accordance with indigenization, in areas densely populated by national communities, the staff of local administration was filled primarily with representatives of these communities, office work and teaching in schools was transferred from Russian to the national language, efforts were made to develop national culture, etc. One of the regional variants of indigenization was Ukrainisation, which was carried out not only in Ukraine proper, but also in areas of Soviet Russia where there were Ukrainian communities. Among others, Ukrainisation also took place in the Azov-Black Sea region: on the Don, Kuban, and Stavropol. In the RSFSR, Ukrainisation was carried out until 1932, when it was found to be erroneous; after that the policy was curtailed and a number of its active agents and supporters were subjected to repression.

The fate of Ukrainisation predetermined its coverage in the scientific literature. In the Soviet historiography this political campaign was not considered, and the situation changed only in the post-Soviet period. At present, we can name a number of works on this topic. Limited by the scope of this article, we recommend the reader to read the open access publication by A.V. Baranov, which provides a detailed review of the historiography on the problem under consideration [1, pp. 38–41]. Nevertheless, nowadays scientific-theoretical and, especially, practical relevance of the problem of Ukrainisation has not decreased. On the contrary, the fateful events unfolding before our eyes make the study of this problem extremely relevant, because the appeal to the lessons of history allows not only to understand the reasons for what is happening in Ukraine, but also to develop methods to prevent such crises.

In this regard, in this publication we have attempted to examine the process of Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region. In the publication, we set ourselves the task to indicate the motives for the deployment of Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region, to establish the factors that corrected it and to identify the reasons that led to its termination.

**Materials and methods.** The object of this study is the national policy of the Bolsheviks in the 1920s – early 1930s. The subject of the study is Ukrainisation as a political campaign conducted in the Azov-Black Sea region in 1923–1932. The study is conducted on the materials of the Don, Kuban and Stavropol, since it was in these regions that Ukrainisation unfolded in the 1920s – early 1930s. During this period of time, these territories of the Azov-Black Sea repeatedly changed their administrative affiliation. In the early 1920s, they were administratively organised as Kuban-Black Sea and Don regions and Stavropol and Tersk provinces. In February 1924, these territorial units became part of the newly formed

South-East. In October of the same year Don, Kuban, Stavropol were included in a new administrative-territorial unit – the North Caucasian region, which existed within the established boundaries until January 1934.

The source base of the work is archival and published documents, as well as statistical materials. A significant amount of information about Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region is contained in the State Archive of the Rostov Region (GARO), the State Archive of Contemporary History of the Stavropol Territory (GANISK), the Centre for Documentation of Contemporary History of the Rostov Region (CDNIRO). The Centre for the Storage of Archival Documents (CSAD) in Shakhty, Rostov Oblast. In particular, the documents of the People's Commissariat for Workers' and Peasants' Inspection (NK-RKI) kept in the State Archive of the Russian Federation (f. p 1185) and the Centre for the Preservation of Archival Documents (TsKhAD) in Shakhty (f. p-754) provide a lot of information about the activities of the authorities in connection with the implementation of Ukrainisation, about the difficulties encountered during the implementation of this campaign and about the attitude of the population to it. The documentation of the North Caucasus Regional Committee of the Communist Party (TsDNIRO, f. 7) and the materials of the OGPU Plenipotentiary Representative for the North Caucasus Region, which we studied in the State Archive of the Stavropol Territory (f. 1), allow us to trace the change in the attitude of the authorities to Ukrainisation and identify the factors that led to its curtailment. Statistical materials allow us to establish regional peculiarities of Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region. Thus, the district-by-district results of the census of the number of Cossacks in the North Caucasus region, conducted during the first All-Union Population Census of the USSR in 1926, give an idea of the quantitative parameters and distribution of the Kuban and Don Cossack communities. The results of the census of the Cossacks of the North Caucasus region are important for understanding why Ukrainisation was much more active in Kuban than in Don.

The leading methods of research were chronological and historical-genetic, as well as the method of synchronisation. These methods of historical cognition allow us to trace the trends and features of Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region, to establish the dynamics of the attitude of the population and representatives of the authorities to it, to identify the factors of its overthrow.

**Results.** The motives that guided the Bolshevik leaders in carrying out Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region (as well as in other similar regions of Soviet Russia) were quite diverse. Not only domestic but also foreign policy calculations of the Communist Party leadership should be emphasised.

First of all, the North Caucasus region was characterised by a high number of natives of Ukraine who declared Ukrainian identity. According to the All-Union population census of 1926, there were over 3.1 million Ukrainians in the North Caucasus region; they were the second largest population group here, after Russians [2, p. 75, 77]. The highest proportion of Ukrainians was in Kuban: in the Kuban district of the North Caucasus region, they made up 61.5 % of the population [3, p. 98]. Ukrainisation was supposed to incline the sympathies of the South Russian Ukrainians towards the Bolsheviks and strengthen the position of the Soviet authorities here.

As T.P. Khlynina and I.Y. Vasiliev rightly point out, an important motive for Ukrainisation was “the Bolshevik leadership's awareness of the weakness of its own social base”. Vasiliev, “the Bolshevik leadership realised the weakness of its own social base” [4, p. 966] due to the significant number of Cossacks in the South of Russia. As in the years of the Civil War, in the 1920s the leaders of the Communist Party were distrustful of the Cossacks, justifiably viewing them as detractors of the Soviet power, which had destroyed their class privileges. The Communist Party regarded Ukrainisation as a means of further destroying the Cossack class, primarily in the Kuban. Unlike the Don Cossacks, the Kuban Cossacks largely considered themselves genetically linked to Ukraine. In particular, in 1926, 586.4 thousand Cossacks in the Kuban district of the North Caucasus region called themselves Ukrainians (77.4 % of their number in the district), and 93.7 thousand (24.6 %) in the Armavir district [5, p. 3, 4–5]. The Bolsheviks sought to “dissolve the self-consciousness of the Kuban Cossacks within the framework of the Ukrainian identity” [6, p. 18] and thus expand and strengthen their social support.

Foreign policy factors also played a role in the development of Ukrainisation. With the help of Ukrainisation, the Communist Party sought to «detach Soviet Ukrainians from the Ukrainian emigration, Western Ukrainian nationalists» and, conversely, to attract Ukrainian emigrants abroad [4, p. 965]. Ukrainisation “shut the mouth of the Ukrainian political emigration, which accused the Bolsheviks of oppressing Ukrainian national culture” and “prevented the neighbouring European powers from playing the «Ukrainian card», using the discontent of the Ukrainian population” [7, p. 86].

The beginning of Ukrainisation dates back to 1923, when the XII Congress of the Communist Party adopted a resolution “On the National Question”. Condemning the distortions in the national construction (“a bias towards nationalism” and, on the other hand, “Great Russian chauvinism”), the Congress formulated the tasks of indigenization outlined above in our publication. In practical terms, as noted by A.V. Baranov, Ukrainisation in the North Caucasus region began in late 1924 and gradually spread “throughout all districts with a predominance of Slavic population” [1, p. 37]. Basically, Ukrainisation covered 35 districts of the North Caucasian Krai [8, p. 65] (out of 145, according to the data for 1925 [9, p. 2–551]).

Ukrainisation provided for filling the staff of the local administration of the North Caucasus region (primarily village and village councils) with South Russian Ukrainians, translating office work into Ukrainian, teaching Ukrainian in schools and training appropriate staff for schools. The production of printed materials in Ukrainian was organised. The development of Ukrainian culture in the South of Russia was promoted by supporting writers who wrote in Ukrainian, creating circles for the study of Ukrainian language and culture, and so on.

The authorities in the North Caucasus region, with the participation of Ukrainianophile activists, made a lot of efforts to implement Ukrainisation and achieved notable results in this field. In April 1926 the publication of “Chervona Gazeta” – a regional newspaper in the Ukrainian language – began, the circulation of which reached 38 thousand copies in December 1930. In addition, 9 more district newspapers in Ukrainian were published in the region, and a “Ukrainian page” was added to the regional children’s newspaper “Lenin’s grandchildren”. The magazine “Novy Shlyhom” was also published. In 1931, 149 titles of books in the Ukrainian language were published in the region with a total circulation of up to 1 million copies [8, p. 66].

The process of transferring schools into the Ukrainian language was actively underway. According to available data, by the summer of 1932 in the North Caucasus region 1,609 schools of the 1st level (covering 221,453 pupils and 558 teachers) and 259 schools of the 2nd level (42,148 pupils and 1,552 teachers) were transferred to the Ukrainian language [1, p. 35]. Teachers for Ukrainianised schools were trained by the pedagogical technical school in the village of Poltavskaya in Kuban, and Ukrainian departments were established in Krasnodar and Taganrog pedagogical schools and Kuban workers’ faculty. The staff of the Ukrainian Research Institute located in Krasnodar were engaged in the development of teaching materials for schools [8, p. 66].

At the same time, a number of circumstances, such as the lack of control by the authorities, shortage of personnel, etc., slowed down Ukrainisation. The most important obstacle to Ukrainisation was the attitude of the population to it. Although it had supporters, judging by the content of sources, the attitude of the overwhelming majority of the population to it ranged from wary and alienated to sharply negative. In this case, there was practically no difference between ordinary farmers, teachers, and representatives of the administration. All of them expressed dissatisfaction with Ukrainisation in one form or another.

Russians living in the areas of Ukrainisation, rightly regarded it as an infringement of their interests. After all, “positive activity in the interests of all non-Russian nationalities inevitably implied actions of the opposite order, i. e. discrimination against Russians” [10, p. 42]. Ukrainisation was often carried out indiscriminately and bureaucratically, and pupils who spoke Russian were forced into Ukrainianised schools. Thus, by the early 1930s in Pavlovsky district of the North Caucasus region “all schools, not excluding Russian ones, were transferred to the Ukrainian language” [11, l. 36]. Teaching in Ukrainian could not please Russian pupils and their parents, for whom such «innovations» were indeed discrimination: it was a violation of their right to study in their native language.

Many of the natives of Ukraine living in the Azov-Black Sea, although they called themselves Ukrainians, spoke Russian. By the first decades of the 20th century, the process of natural, objectively conditioned assimilation of the natives of Ukraine in the Azov-Black Sea region went far enough. Having found themselves in a multi-ethnic region dominated by the Russian language and culture, having lived here for generations and adapting to new cultural and linguistic conditions, many natives of Ukraine began to consider Russian their native language. In 1926, the share of such Russian-speaking Ukrainians in the North Caucasus region reached 32.35 % [3, p. 98]. These people were not enthusiastic about the categorical imposition of the Ukrainian language in schools, in the authorities and in the media.

Moreover, even the Ukrainian-speaking population of the Azov-Black Sea region did not welcome “the imposition of Ukrainian as the only official language”. Teaching in Ukrainianised schools was conducted in literary Ukrainian (“Galician dialect”), while the inhabitants of the Azov-Black Sea communicated in “balachka” – a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian [1, p. 37]. Most importantly, the widespread imposition of the Ukrainian language in the RSFSR made it difficult for citizens to access social lifts. Contemporaries rightly argued: “If you teach a child in the Ukrainian language, they will not enter high school”, “will not be able to be in Russian society, they may be ridiculous” [1, p. 36]. A student who graduated from a school with teaching in Ukrainian could hardly expect to enter a higher education institution, because they were taught in Russian. In the RSFSR, the career growth of an official who spoke Ukrainian was also difficult.

An indicator of local residents’ rejection of Ukrainisation was not only their statements, but also their refusal to subscribe to newspapers and magazines, if they switched to Ukrainian. Print media in Ukrainian “were perceived as something alien and ignored en masse”, their circulation “fell sharply”: for example, after Ukrainisation the circulation of the newspaper “Kolkhozny Put” published in Yeisky district decreased from 13 to 5 thousand copies [12, p. 80].

The denial of Ukrainisation by the population of the Azov-Black Sea region is also evidenced by the materials of special surveys conducted by the staff of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspectorate (RPI). In particular, such a survey was conducted at the end of 1931 in the Kashar district of the North Caucasus region. The staff of the RKI claimed that schools in the district were sufficiently provided with literature in Ukrainian [13, fol. 12, 17], but this was hardly the



only achievement. Otherwise, Ukrainisation progressed at a snail's pace. The local administration resisted the transfer of office work into Ukrainian, even though many of its representatives spoke it (or rather, they spoke Balachka, but the staff of the RCT obviously did not get into such nuances). For example, in Maryevsky village council of Kasharsky district not only 75 % of residents spoke Ukrainian, but also both employees of the village council, all six representatives of the collective farm administration, and one of the two employees of the village consumer society. Despite this, office work was conducted in Russian; only correspondence with the district administration was conducted in Ukrainian, and even then irregularly [13, l. 12]. The Ukrainian language study groups in the village councils of the Kashar district usually had a small number of students (up to 10–20 people) and quickly disintegrated due to poor attendance. The editorial staff of the district newspaper shied away from popularising the Ukrainian language [13, l. 12, 12 ob., 16 ob.].

It should be said that the negative attitude of the majority of Azov-Black Sea residents to Ukrainisation did not discourage the Party and Soviet officials at the regional level, let alone at the republican or all-Union level. It is not by chance that researchers characterise Ukrainisation as a “forcible-bureaucratic”, “coercive”, “administrative-coercive”, “aggressive” [14, p. 81, 109] political campaign. In implementing this campaign, the Bolsheviks did not consider the opinion of the population, based on their inherent messianic confidence in their own rightness.

Characteristic is the position of employees of the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR, who did not recognise “the argument that the local population should be given the right to choose their own language of instruction in schools” [10, p. 392]. No less characteristic are the decisions of the “Commission for the execution” of decisions on Ukrainisation created in the North Caucasus region. In February 1932, the Commission adopted an extensive resolution on the progress of Ukrainisation, where it was admitted that in most districts of the region the implementation of this policy was unsatisfactory due to its “opportunistic underestimation” by the district authorities, who did not give “a decisive response to both the great-power chauvinistic tendencies of the kulak part of the population and the resistance of some employees of district and village institutions” [1, l. 36]. Translated from party-bureaucratic slang, this meant that the commission considered the most important obstacle to Ukrainisation to be the rejection of it by the population and lower-level officials. But the dissatisfaction of the population with Ukrainisation had no effect on the determination of the authorities to implement this campaign. “Commission of Execution” warned the district leadership about responsibility for failure to fulfil the plans of Ukrainisation, planned to intensify explanatory work with the population, to fight more resolutely against those who evaded “teaching the Ukrainian language”, etc. [11, l. 36–37]. The commission's decisions indicated that the protests of the population would not stop the Bolsheviks and that Ukrainisation would continue using command and administrative methods.

The resentment of the Azov-Black Sea inhabitants against forced Ukrainisation was not the main reason why this policy was terminated at the end of 1932.

The first of them was the intention of the leaders of the Communist Party of Ukraine to use Ukrainisation to annex to the Ukrainian SSR those territories of the RSFSR where there were corresponding national communities [10, p. 388–389]. The second was the desire of emigrants and foreign politicians to present Ukrainisation as a forced concession of the Union centre and to use Ukrainian nationalism to weaken the USSR [4, p. 967]. Gradually, the Allied leadership and Stalin personally were less and less doubtful of the existence of these intentions and calculations and more and more disappointed in Ukrainisation, which turned from a means of strengthening Soviet power into a source of inter-ethnic tension and foreign policy problems.

In the early 1930s, the discontent of the Union leadership with Ukrainisation turned into resentment. This happened in connection with total collectivisation and the 1932 grain procurement campaign.

Acting as the strongest social irritant, collectivisation provoked peasant resistance. At the same time, in the republics of the USSR and in the national regions of the RSFSR, resistance to collectivisation often took on the colour of nationalism and separatism, when representatives of certain nationalities interpreted what was happening as their oppression by Russia and declared their desire for independence. Such sentiments manifested themselves in the Azov-Black Sea region in the second half of the bad harvest year of 1932, as the fulfilment of grain procurement plans by collective and individual farmers was very difficult and forced the authorities to apply extremely harsh measures, up to and including firing sentences against bread embezzlers and guilty local officials. In response, anti-Soviet agitation and calls for separatism grew in the North Caucasus region. Moreover, such phenomena were particularly characteristic of Ukrainisation areas, primarily in the Kuban.

The leading officials of the North Caucasus region and the OGPU plenipotentiary representative in the region, E.G. Evdokimov, claimed that “under the flag of Ukrainisation [in the Kuban] the most egregious counter-revolutionary work was carried out” [15, l. 14]. This work was led by secret anti-Soviet organisations: “Union for the Liberation of Ukraine” and “Union of Kuban and Ukraine”. The latter was headed by professors of the Ukrainian Research Institute in Krasnodar, who maintained contact with the pedagogical school in the village of Poltavskaya, where anti-Soviet-minded nationalist-Ukrainianisers were also entrenched [15, l. 14].

Directly subversive activities were carried out by ordinary agents of Ukrainisation - teachers, lecturers, and leaders of circles for the study of the Ukrainian language and culture. According to the Chekists, these people used "Ukrainianisation, chauvinistic and nationalist sentiments to organise sabotage, counter-revolution", to create "antagonism between Russians and Ukrainians" [16, fol. 9, 10], carrying out terrorist acts and organising armed demonstrations. Yermakov, the head of the pedagogical technical school in the village of Poltavskaya, who was arrested by the OGPU, testified during interrogation that various circles were created at the technical school "under official signs" (for example, "Ukrainian choir circle"), but they were engaged in training anti-Soviet activists from young people. OGPU officers of the North Caucasus region reported that they had liquidated "a number of Ukrainian-chauvinist teachers' organisations", most of which were "insurgent-terrorist". They not only "carried out quite extensive work on the processing of our youngsters, proceeding from the attitude to prepare young cadres for the future struggle, educating them in the bourgeois-chauvinist spirit, in the spirit of self-styled independence", but also prepared to commit terrorist acts both in the Azov-Black Sea and in Moscow [15, l. 13–14].

Ultimately, the conductors of Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region intended to annex Kuban to Ukraine: "Kuban, being an actual continuation of Ukraine, should in the future be a constituent part of the Great Ukraine from the Carpathians to the Caucasus Mountains" [15, l. 14], part of the "nationalist bourgeois-democratic state of «United Sobornaya Ukraina»" [16, l. 10]. In this they hoped for help from the capitalist foreign countries and emigrants. The Chekists claimed that the Ukrainians had contacts with the ataman of Poltavskaya village Omelchenko, who had emigrated abroad. Allegedly Omelchenko sent a group of his emissaries, "Cossack officers" to Ukraine and Kuban. The Kuban Ukrainians were to prepare armed detachments from local Cossacks "for an internal coup at the time of the intervention" [15, l. 6, 15].

Of course, the above statements by the North Caucasian Chekists should be treated with great caution. A study of the activities of the OGPU-NKVD in the 1930s allows us to say with confidence that the officers of these agencies were inclined to exaggerate the threat of counter-revolution in the USSR, to look for the causes of numerous lapses in work, accidents, etc., not in the low qualifications or negligence of their employees, but in purposeful pest control. We believe that the OGPU also exaggerated the degree of anti-Soviet activity of the Ukrainians.

At the same time, there is no reason to completely deny the conclusions of the OGPU officers in the North Caucasus region. It is obvious that among the Ukrainophiles and Ukrainians of the Azov-Black Sea region there was a certain number of supporters of self-styled independence and reunification with Ukraine. Sources give grounds for assertions that "by 1932, the policy of Ukrainisation had already led to the growth of chauvinism among Ukrainians, which often manifested itself in the form of blatant Russophobia and anti-Semitism" [14, p. 188]. The aspiration of Ukrainophile nationalists-antisovietists to establish contacts with emigrants and abroad cannot be disputed. Sources also confirm the interest of foreign governments and intelligence agencies in establishing contacts with the "fifth column" in the USSR in case of intervention of Western countries against the Soviet Union.

On 14 December 1932, the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a resolution "On Bread Procurement in Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Western Region". This document put a stop to the history of Ukrainisation in the RSFSR, describing this policy as one of the causes of the 1932 grain procurement crisis. The resolution stated that "frivolous, not arising from the cultural interests of the population, non-Bolshevik «Ukrainisation» of almost half of the districts of the North Caucasus... gave a legal form to the enemies of Soviet power to organise resistance to the activities and tasks of the Soviet power on the part of kulaks, officers, re-emigrant Cossacks, participants of the Kuban Rada, etc." [17, p. 576–577]. Such a grave accusation left Ukrainisation no chance. According to the decree, Ukrainisation was to be continued in Ukraine, but only if the Communist Party controlled its implementation. In the North Caucasus Krai, Ukrainisation was to be stopped and its results eliminated: orders were given to reverse the translation of office work and teaching in schools from Ukrainian into Russian, to Russify the previously Ukrainised media, etc. [17, p. 577]. All these measures were carried out in the North Caucasus region in the shortest possible time. At the same time, the repressions against Ukrainisation activists, which had been launched even before the December 1932 decree, continued in the region [18, p. 81].

**Discussion and Conclusion.** We state that Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region was a type of the policy of korenizatsiya (national-communism), launched in the USSR since 1923. The objectives of this political campaign in the South of Russia were to develop the Ukrainian language and culture and to replace the class identity of the Kuban Cossacks with a Ukrainian identity, and its goal was to expand the social base of the Bolsheviks in the region.

Ukrainisation in the Azov-Black Sea region had some active supporters among local intellectuals-Ukrainophiles and was supported by groups of sympathisers represented by ordinary farmers, including Cossacks. The overwhelming majority of the local population, not excluding natives of Ukraine, had a negative attitude to Ukrainisation, as the process of their assimilation in the multi-ethnic community of the Azov-Black Sea, dominated by the Russian language and Russian culture, had gone far enough and they did not need to restore their Ukrainian identity.

The protests of the population were unable to stop Ukrainisation, as it was a political campaign initiated from above and carried out by command-and-control methods. Critical for Ukrainisation was the fact that it was used by the opponents

of the Bolsheviks to foment nationalism, chauvinism and separatist sentiments. Under the conditions of aggravation of the socio-political situation in the USSR in the course of total collectivisation, the destructive potential of Ukrainianisation in the North Caucasus region became obvious to the Allied centre. Stalin and other leaders of the Communist Party realised that national communism was out of their control, that the first component of this policy prevailed over the second and threatened the stability of both the USSR as a whole and the Azov-Black Sea region in particular. Therefore, at the end of 1932 Ukrainianisation was stopped and its results were liquidated. Thus, the danger of interethnic conflicts was eliminated and the obstacles to the formation of the South Russian community in the Azov-Black Sea area disappeared. We believe that nowadays the sad experience of voluntaristic Ukrainianisation will be as relevant as possible in the new regions of the Russian Federation, the prosperity of which directly depends on the achievement of interethnic harmony.

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