

Belarusian identity: national and global context

The problem of identity is one of the most relevant issues of social analysis and humanitarian sciences. In the second half of XX century, the questions concerning the identity, became familiar directions of research in the scientific communities of most countries around the world, including the post-Soviet space. Moreover, this issue has acquired special urgency for states that emerged after the collapse of the USSR.

Due to some historical reasons during the existence of the Soviet state, issues of self-determination of nations effectively were solved within the existing state ideology. The issue of national identity was not standing in front of the states of the USSR. Everything has changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The young states faced a number of serious problems on the way to democracy and building a market economy model. The economic and political crisis, which were experienced by the formed independent republics, was compounded by the crisis in culture. The destruction of pre-existing ideological system resulted with anomie condition, which was described in detail by the classic of sociological thought E. Durkheim. Cultural pluralism, diffusion of the values and ideals, rapid social transformation – all of these have led to the fact, issue of self-determination became central in the public consciousness.

The problem of national and cultural identity crystallized in the minds of Belarusian people in this context and looked for reflection in scientific research. The main task of the scientists at that time was to answer questions about what is the national sovereignty and an independent Belarusian state, who are the Belarusians, in what way they are different from other peoples, what is the place of Belarusians in the world, what is "Belaruskost", et cetera. As a result, several concepts concerning Belarusian national identity have been developed. These concepts were developed in the framework of two fundamental approaches. The first approach was based on the historical and cultural traditions and values, to which representatives of the Belarusian cultural elite have appealed. The essence of this approach was the recognition of the important significance of national identity built on the knowledge of their roots, ethnic and cultural traditions, and

historic, primarily pre-Soviet, past as tools of the radical reconstruction of the present. The exclusive role was assigned to the Belarusian language. Language "marker" essentially acted as the main principle of separation of the population into Belarusians and non-Belarusians, at that time it was separation, but not the consolidating factor of the Belarusian nation.

Of course, the identity of any nation occurs due to the events of the past, but to limit its interpretation only by retrospective means not to understand it till the end. Identity, as the nation itself, not always turned to the future at least and this long-term plan, according to the law of human society, cannot be limited by the modality "what we will do for ourselves." It is impossible not to wonder about what our experience can give other nations better than what knowledge, which pained lessons we can share them. This is not about how to proclaim a new dawn of European humanity by involving the experience of the countries of the former USSR in general and Belarus in particular, it is clear that we are not entitled to that. But, at the same time, it must be noted that this experience, like Belarusian national and cultural identity in general can be interesting and useful not only for the residents of our country.