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**HOMO SOVIETICUS IDENTITY EDUCATION
IN THE CONTEXT OF SOVIET REALITY**

**(Review: Kahanov Yu. Homo Sovieticus Identity Construction (1953 – 1991):
Case of Ukraine. Zaporizhzhia: Inter-M, 2019. 432 p., il.)**

**ВИХОВАННЯ “НОМО SOVIETICUS”
В РЕАЛІЯХ РАДЯНСЬКОЇ ДІЙСНОСТІ**

**(Рецензія на: Каганов Ю. Конструювання “радянської людини” (1953 – 1991):
українська версія. Запоріжжя: Інтер-М, 2019. 432 с., іл.)**

In recent years, the modern humanities have been enriched by a number of generalized studies on problems, the objective study of which in Soviet times was not possible. The Soviet experiment on the education of the “new person” (covering all spheres of public life and lasted throughout the life of a Soviet citizen) belongs to such little-studied and at the same time relevant issues today. Interest in this problem is due not only to scientific demand, but also purely practical. Ukrainian society still feels the consequences (both direct and indirect) of the Soviet “homo sovieticus” education, which are manifested in the nostalgia of individuals for “communism” and their respective political sympathies and cultural practices. Thus, the processes of formation of the Ukrainian political nation are slowed down and the colonial syndrome is preserved. In order to effectively counteract information aggression and

deconstruct anti-Ukrainian historical myths implanted in the public consciousness by Soviet and Russian propaganda, fundamental research into the phenomenon of the construction of the Soviet man is extremely necessary.

Yurii Kahanov's monograph is aimed at studying the problem of the formation of the "Soviet person" in the Ukrainian SSR in 1953 – 1991. Using modern methodological tools, the author identifies the main components of the system of education and influence on the consciousness of the "builder of communism" – education (secondary schools, vocational schools and universities), media (press, radio, television), mass culture (language practices, political anecdotes, movies, music, holidays and rituals). At the same time, the author shows the forms and methods of resistance to such a policy. Based on the above, we believe that the scientific project of Yurii Kahanov is one of the few studies of this format in this thematic niche.

The structure proposed by the author does not cause objections and is quite optimal for a thorough and comprehensive disclosure of the scientific problem. The work is based on a problem-chronological approach to the study of historical phenomena, consists of an introduction, four sections, conclusions, a list of sources and literature used and a nominal index.

In the introductory part of the monograph, Yu. Kahanov duly revealed all the necessary components. First of all, it is the relevance substantiation of the research topic; he clearly defined the purpose and objectives that the author considered a priority to solve, the object and subject of research. The outlined chronological framework of the study – 1953 – 1991 (the lower chronological limit is the beginning of the era of de-Stalinization, the upper one is the Ukraine's independence) seems quite expedient.

When writing the monograph, Yu. Kahanov used a large and diverse range of sources (a set of written, oral and pictorial materials), which allowed to solve the tasks. In particular, he introduced into scientific circulation the materials of 352 cases from 57 funds of the central state, regional and branch archives of Ukraine, as well as 121 units of accounting for photographic documents. In addition, the author included 39 interviews, 443 monographs and articles, 31 dissertations and dissertation abstracts. Among them, there are materials of the funds of the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine, the Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine, the Central State Archive of Supreme Authorities and Administration of Ukraine, the Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art of Ukraine, Central State Film, Photo Archive of Ukraine named after H. S. Pshenychnyi, state archives of Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Sumy, Ternopil, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi regions; the Fund of Fine Arts of the National Library of Ukraine named after V. I. Vernadskyi, funds of art publications of the National Library of Belarus, Russian State Library, Museum-Archive and Documentation Center of the Ukrainian Smoloskyp self-publishing.

It should be noted that in the monograph for the first time a whole array of documents was introduced into scientific circulation, which until recently was marked "top secret". At the same time, Yu. Kahanov proved to be an experienced researcher and, without rejecting the informative content of the documents of the Soviet repressive and punitive bodies, subjected them to careful scientific criticism and verification. Because he understands the scale of falsification, attribution and imitation of high-profile cases by the KGB (Committee for State Security). For example, the information of analytical and generalizing materials of special reports and reports of the KGB to the Central Committee of the CP(b)U (Communist Party (of the Bolsheviks) of Ukraine), archival and criminal cases is verified for the first time with the help of oral sources.

In the first section, *“Soviet Person”: Historiographical Discourses and Theoretical Conceptualization*, Yu. Kahanov, having analyzed the works of his predecessors, came to the conclusion that the research topic belonged to those that had not become the subject of comprehensive research, although some of its aspects had been studied by scientists (pp. 10–67). Carrying out a historiographical analysis in the study, the author generally managed to go beyond the traditional bibliographic description. This was achieved through the involvement of a sound theoretical basis. The author’s classification of works on three levels (depending on the scale of the problem study) does not cause any objections: 1) generalizing works on the construction of “communist consciousness” after 1953; 2) research on the formation of “homo sovieticus” identity in the USSR in the 1950s – 1980s; 3) studies that cover certain aspects of this process (p. 11). At the same time, he singles out the Soviet, dissident, Western, Central European, Russian, and Ukrainian scientific discourses of the “new Soviet person”. This approach allowed for a comparative analysis of the views of scientists on the process of constructing “homo sovieticus” identity.

In the subsection devoted to theoretical approaches to solving the problem, the author characterizes and shows the practical use of the theory of totalitarianism, industrial society, mass culture and authoritarian personality in the analysis of the phenomenon of a “Soviet person”. The study is marked by a successful selection of the necessary research methods: general scientific (analytical and synthetic, inductive and deductive), special-historical (comparative-historical, historical-genetic, historical-typological, and problem-chronological), interdisciplinary (socio-psychological) methods. At the same time, axiological and historical-anthropological approaches were used.

Nevertheless, we believe that it would be appropriate to provide definitions of key terms used in the work.

The second section, *Education and Upbringing as Mechanisms for Constructing the “Soviet person” in Ukraine* (pp. 68–139), is devoted to the analysis of the main factors of the individual socialization, which influenced the formation of basic ideas, values, and patterns of behavior of young people.

The researcher emphasizes the primary role of secondary school in the formation of the Soviet citizen. He shows the opposition of school and family experience as formal/informal, indoctrinal/free one. It was school (as a body of state education) and not family education that was given priority (p. 69). Thus a person was formed according to a certain standard, a general pattern of a certain behavior, worldview, and political views (p. 71). Accordingly, Yu. Kahanov emphasizes that “in the conditions of strict directives of the state and the absence of social control, the school increasingly became a conservative social institution, whose activities were aimed at protecting and preserving the existing order” (p. 72).

Since historical education played a key role in the formation of the “Soviet person”, the author in his study indirectly touches on this issue (p. 82). At the same time, he emphasizes the fragmentary study of the history of Ukraine, which was used to deplete national feelings, formed in some cases by family upbringing, and other factors (p. 83).

The period of the 1950s – 1980s was characterized by the Russification of the school educational process. This aspect is also covered in the work in the form of statistical data presented in the study, which show the dynamics of the displacement of the Ukrainian language from the educational process. The direct result of this was the rejection by the average student of the Ukrainian language as a tool of communication and utilitarian attitude to it through the prism of assessment in the certificate (pp. 85–87).

The Soviet system, pursuing a policy aimed at forming the “right person” completely ignored the natural desire of the individual for freedom and self-expression, defined clear rules and regulations, for violation of which there were severe sanctions. Certainly, any coercion entails resistance, and this was especially evident among young people. Forms and motives of resistance and the reaction of law enforcement agencies to them are reflected in the text of the work.

The author analyzes the effectiveness of ideological and educational activities, the content of the educational process, labor education, Russification processes in the system of higher education in Ukraine in 1953 – 1991 (pp. 102–121). Also he singles out two main tasks of educating students in the pro-Soviet ideological direction: 1) to form the necessary critical minimum of “correct” beliefs, values and patterns of behavior, 2) to “re-educate” and correct “harmful” views already instilled by family education (p. 121).

At the same time, based on the analysis of KGB reporting materials (from the Sectoral State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine), Yu. Kahanov shows specific manifestations of resistance of young people (ranging from wrong tastes, views and individual expressions to the creation of organizations and associations of anti-Soviet orientation) who studied in higher and vocational institutions and repressive measures aimed at suppressing it. The author gives examples of KGB inspiring conflicts in order to prove anti-Soviet (p. 129).

The third section, *Mass Media in the Ideological Matrix of Formation of Public Consciousness*, is devoted to the coverage of the influence of the press, radio and television on society and the individual in the process of educating the “new Soviet person” (pp. 140–209).

A special place in the formation of the “Soviet person” was played by the press, which covered a huge audience. Describing this means of ideological policy in Ukraine, the author singles out republican, regional, district, city, mass-circulation newspapers and the grassroots press (wall newspaper, light film newspaper and photo film newspaper) (p. 141).

At the same time, the author cites the main trends in the functioning of this component of the government’s educational work – the predominance of allied political newspapers over republican, “voluntary-compulsory” subscriptions, the policy of Russification was implemented in the press (in the 1970s, the share of Ukrainian-language magazines in the country fell from 46% to 19%), the functioning of temniks (they determined the topics forbidden to cover), the struggle against religion and the church, conducting scientific and atheistic propaganda (p. 148). In his monograph, Yu. Kahanov emphasizes that with the beginning of “perestroika”, the press began to reproduce actuality more and cover reality – writing about shortcomings, more widely informing about the work of party, Soviet and public organizations.

Particular attention is paid to the place and role of Ukrainian radio in preserving the national identity (Soviet model) in the context of continuous ideologizing. Radio was considered the most effective means of implementing the party line for the formation of “homo sovieticus” identity. That is why, until 1962, radios were subject to mandatory registration (the violation – threatened with a fine or even criminal liability) (p. 171).

Zaporizhzhia researcher argues that Ukrainian radio, along with its ideological and propaganda function, at that time remained a communicative element that was much clearer, more consistent and fuller than other media, contributed to the preservation and promotion of Ukrainian culture through the native language, folk song and other archetypes of Ukrainian identity (p. 184).

The author does not ignore the phenomenon of “radio hooliganism”, which he defines as “ideological confrontation on radio waves”, due to the desire of young people to self-

affirmation and the emergence of the amateur radio movement (pp. 188–191). In the monograph, the author identifies the main forms of violations in radio broadcasts, which did not have anti-Soviet content, but rather violated established moral norms (p. 188).

The monograph also reflected the issues of organizing the work of underground radio stations and the measures taken by law enforcement agencies to combat “radio hooliganism” (pp. 187–189). However, party officials and security officials saw a much greater threat to the formation of the “Soviet person” in the broadcasting of foreign radio stations, whose work undermined the foundations of state security (p. 192). In particular, the researcher cites information that as of 1982, “anti-Soviet broadcasting” to Ukraine was conducted by 37 radio stations located in various foreign countries – Freedom, Albania, Voice of Israel, China, Free Europe, Voice of America, BBC, German Wave, Transworld Radio, Voice of the Andes, IBRA, World Adventist Radio (p. 193). At the same time, the author shows the authorities’ measures to intercept and “mute” the signals of “enemy” radio stations.

We find interesting the story of the ideological influence of television on the construction of the “Soviet person” in Ukraine. During the period under study, television became an integral part of everyday life of all citizens. Yuri Kahanov claims that the product made in the studios of Moscow and Leningrad prevailed on TV (except for children’s programs of own production and Ukrainian live product). In the existence of television, the author identifies the most characteristic features: the loss of national identity and the transformation into an instrument of Russification (as of the first half of 1987, 39.9% of broadcasting was on Ukrainian television in Ukrainian and 60.1% – in Russian), counter-propaganda programs, rigid ideology and censorship, communication with the audience through letters (interpreted as the “voice of workers” and “signal from below”), the emergence of private channels, expanding coverage of previously taboo topics (pp. 209–243).

The fourth section, *Sociocultural Process and Indoctrination of Soviet Identity*, is devoted to the study of the influence of Soviet language practices, political anecdotes, cinema, music, holidays, and rituals on the formation of “homo sovieticus” identity.

First of all, the author focuses on the analysis of the relationship between language and ideology on two levels: the processes that take place in language under the influence of political ideology, and linguistic means by which to influence the identity of native speakers (p. 245). The study also presents signs of Soviet bureaucratic language such as: monologue, ritual, secrecy, directiveness, the presence of a single collective point of view, constant sources of tension, deformation of the linguistic picture of the world, characterized by primitivism, unidirectional movement of time.

The scientist’s appeal to the issue of spreading the anecdote seems new to us. In his work, he argues that in this way (listening or telling) the “Soviet person” compensated for the possibilities of self-expression. At the same time, anecdotes showed distrust of the official line that national aspirations disappeared with the creation of a “new Soviet person” (pp. 255–256). He singles out anecdotes on topics permitted by communist ideology (alcoholism, mother-in-law, weather, housing problems, petty bureaucrats, officials, etc.), political anecdotes and anecdotes on ideological topics (aimed at the complete debunking of all Soviet idols: heroes, endless victories celebrated, institutions (parties, state security agencies, councils, etc.).

The use of cinema to construct a “new Soviet person” and distort reality (the formation of faith in the triumph of the ideals of communism) was reflected in the monograph. The functional capabilities of the film industry and film screening in Ukraine are revealed. He claims that

Ukrainian film studios lost to Russian ones both in terms of the level of resources and in terms of the sustainability of human resources (p. 277). Ideological functions relied on music, which also went beyond the established framework of the Soviet system (pp. 296–312).

A special place was given to the creation of socialist rituals. The author in his study cites the gradation of holidays: national (state), labor, calendar, household ones (p. 314). The work of the agitation and propaganda department of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U on the introduction of Soviet holidays and rites into everyday life is shown. At the same time, Yu. Kahanov emphasizes that “for the majority of citizens, political rallies often seemed to pass by them, and joyful feelings were rather caused by free days among family and friends. The feeling of falsehood, artificiality and insincerity of ceremonial and festive actions led to the formation of a satirical and humorous reaction to them” (p. 336).

At the same time, we believe that the study would be enriched by a comparative analysis of the Ukrainian version of the construction of the “Soviet person” with the corresponding processes in other republics of the USSR.

The conclusions that follow from the results of the work seem balanced. The author avoids categorical judgments, which reflects the impartiality in covering the diversity of processes and phenomena under study.

A significant addition to the theoretical material is a well-chosen illustrative material. We should also emphasize its appropriate design. The involved complex of pictorial sources is contained in the funds of the Central State Film, Photo Archive of Ukraine named after H. S. Pshenychnyi, the Fund of Fine Arts of the National Library of Ukraine named after V. I. Vernadskyi, funds of art publications of the National Library of Belarus, Russian State Library.

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