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FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION: A NEW VISION OF RECENT HISTORY OF UKRAINE (review of the collective monograph: Ukraine at the Epicenter of World Systems Confrontation (1939 – 1990) / NAS of Ukraine, Institute of History of Ukraine. Kyiv: Akadempriodzka, 2021. 544 p.)

ВІД ДРУГОЇ СВІТОВОЇ ВІЙНИ ДО РОЗПАДУ РАДЯНСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ: НОВА ВІЗІЯ НОВІТНЬОЇ ІСТОРІЇ УКРАЇНИ (рецензія на колективну монографію: Україна в епіцентрі протистояння світових систем (1939 – 1990) / НАН України, Ін-т історії України. Київ: Академперіодика, 2021. 544 с.

Last year, a collective monograph “Ukraine at the Epicenter of World Systems Confrontation (1939 – 1990)” was published at the Academic Publishing House “Academicperiodyca”, the authors of which are known Ukrainian historians, scholars of the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine: Viktor Danylenko, Viktor Krupyna, Stanislav Kulchytsky, Oleksandr Lysenko, Olena Stiazhkina, Larysa Yakubova.

The monograph contains 16 chapters, combined into two large chronological blocks: “Battle Field of Communism-Bilshovyzm and Nazism” and “Ukraine in the Age of World Systems Confrontation”. It should be noted in advance that individual sections of the work are written in the field of global history and contain the reasons of the authors about the place and role of Ukraine (or the “Ukrainian issue”) in the history of Europe and the world from the interwar period to the collapse of the USSR.

Chapter 1 “Continuous War Regime: Mobilization, Militarization and Practice Maintaining of Unannounced State of Emergency in Soviet Ukraine in 1920 – the beginning of the 1940s” (the author: Olena Shtiazhkina) focuses on the analysis of the Ukrainian society on the eve of the Global War – World War II. Professor O. Stiazhkina uses the concept of “a continuous war” to characterize historical conditions in which European countries were found after the Versailles Treaty of 1919. The state of “a continuous war” was characterized by the following signs: expansion of the arsenal and scope of “emergency measures” tools, social mobilizations, repression and terrorism, local armed clashes and local wars, militaristic rhetoric and propaganda (p. 8).

Analyzing “the Ukrainian realities”, the researcher states that in the 1920s – the 1930s mobilization and militarization were an organic state of the Soviet power policy, and the majority of components of emergency and martial law were the norm of a daily life and formed a special, unannounced state of a continuous war long before the official introduction of “martial law” on June 22, 1941. In her opinion, the most large-scale and consistent in their policy of destruction of the Ukrainian people was the war with the peasantry, whose apogee was the Holodomor in 1932 – 1933 (pp. 10–11).

Describing various manifestations of “wars without war”, Olena Shtiazhkina, even talks about everyday aspects of life, emphasizing that a total control over the population movement, restriction of the living space of every citizen, the establishment of rules of apartment residence, even transformed a home of a person into a “regime territory”. The researcher even focused on the system of education and upbringing of children in the USSR, which became of a militaristic nature. The ideology of bringing up children-warriors, who will be in defense of the Soviet homeland at any moment, was skillfully implanted into curricula, fiction for children, mass culture (p. 27). Summing up, O. Stiazhkina cites Hannah Arendt’s words: “The Stalinist War against Ukraine was twice as effective as a terribly bloody German invasion and occupation” (p. 36).

Professor Oleksandr Lysenko is the author of the next five sections. Writing about the mobilization measures of the Soviet authorities at the beginning of World War II, the researcher provides interesting information: in September of 1939, a hidden mobilization was carried out, which caused panic among population; on September 8 – 9, in several large cities, people overcrowded the railway stations, trying to leave the country, escaping from the war. Police attempts to disperse the exalted crowd were unsuccessful. Then an order was issued to shoot unarmed people (p. 41).

Oleksandr Lysenko analyzed the mobilization measures of the Soviet authorities during the so-called “liberation campaigns” of the Red Army to Western Ukraine, Northern Bukovyna and Bessarabiya. Therefore, he analyzed the number of the Soviet troops, weapons and equipment in the first half of 1941 and compared these forces with the capacity of Germany and its allies. The historian states that the USSR had been preparing for a great war for a long time, and leadership was aware of the power of potential opponents, whose intentions were also not a mystery to the USSR. Therefore, the thesis of “treacherous”, unexpected attack of

Germany and its allies cannot withstand any criticism. It arose to justify the mistakes of the USSR military and political elite and catastrophic defeat of the Red Army at the initial stage of the war (p. 51).

In Chapter “The Holocaust in Ukraine” Oleksandr Lysenko initially tried to outline the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, the origins of which date back to pre-Christian times (p. 98). The scholar emphasized that the Nazi propaganda machine launched systemic anti-Jewish propaganda on the territory of occupied Ukraine. He agreed to the opinion of the Dutch historian Karel Berkhoff, which indicated that the ultimate goal of the German occupation policy was depopulation of Ukraine as a result of a partial physical destruction, deportation and assimilation of local population. In this regard, the genocide of the Jews took place in occupied Ukraine in the context of a permanent terror of the SS and Wehrmacht units against representatives of all ethnic groups (p. 102).

Professor O. Lysenko provides many known data on the apparatus of violence, writes about the role of the Wehrmacht, SS, Orpo in the extermination of the Jews, gives many examples of mass executions of the Jews, including the killings in Kamianets Podilsky. The researcher focuses on the difficult issue of the local population participation in killings of the Jews (pp. 120–122). At the same time, the historian cites a large number of examples of rescue of the Jews by residents of Ukraine who were guided by universal values. As an example, he quotes the response of the director of Lviv City Library O. Masliak when he was asked by a relative, why being at risk he provided help to the Jews: “I was born a human being, and only later I became aware of being Ukrainian” (p. 122). It is important that the author also writes about the existence of the Jewish resistance movement, for example, he indicates that in the second half of 1942 there were only 30 – 40 Jewish combat groups in Volyn, in which almost a thousand people fought against the Nazis (p. 128).

Analyzing the deployment of the Ukrainian liberation movement during World War II, O. Lysenko notes that in September of 1939, the Ukrainian nationalists raised the uprising against the Polish authorities. Almost 8,000 people participated in September clashes. As a result of scattered, sporadic attacks, they seized eight aircraft, seven cannons, a tank, 23 machine guns and 80 automatic rifles, 3 757 rifles 3 345 pistols, 25 cars. The Ukrainian nationalists took in captivity 3 610 soldiers of the Polish Army and Police (p. 138). However, the scholar acknowledges that the hopes of nationalists of an independent Ukrainian state formation in Western lands did not only come true not only because this did not meet the goals of the invaders (Germany and the USSR), but also because the Organization of the Ukrainian nationalists (OUN) at that time did not prove to be a self-sufficient force capable of mastering the political situation and achieving the goal (p. 142).

The scholar emphasized that during the first days of the German-Soviet War, in all western regions of Ukraine operated the armed departments of the OUN members, who captured settlements, important objects, released prisons in Lviv, Kremianka, Berezhany, Zolochiv and other cities. During the period of June 24 – 28, the clashes of the Ukrainian nationalists with the Red Army continued. By the end of the month, the insurgents took control of the territory of Bibrka and Zhovkva districts of Lviv region. Fierce battles lasted for three days in Dubno, and in Lutsk and other cities, guerrillas controlled bridges, railway stations, and other objects. The Ukrainian formations controlled the cities of Dolyna, Kosiv, Kolomyia (Stanislavivshchyna), and the regional center (p. 144) controlled for two days. The historian criticizes the insinuations of involvement of the soldiers of the “Nachtigal” battalion in the killings of the Polish intelligentsia and the Jewish pogroms in Lviv (p. 146).

The author of the section describes in detail the attempt of the OUN members to restore the Ukrainian state in the summer of 1941, the repression of the Nazis against the Ukrainian nationalists, the transition of the latter to the underground and the beginning of the OUN armed struggle against the German invaders, the formation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), its fight against the Soviet partisans. The researcher does not conceal large-scale losses of the UPA, especially in the battle near Hurby (April of 1945). At the same time, he emphasizes: if at the peak of activity (1944) the UPA had up to 40,000 soldiers, then, in general, through various military and political structures that stood on an independent platform, several hundred thousand Ukrainians passed through during the war and during the post-war period. This is a convincing evidence that the Ukrainian independence movement of the wartime period was a continuation of a long struggle for Ukraine's independence in previous centuries: not brought on someone else's bayonets, but an organic product of the socio-political development of the Ukrainian political nation (p. 174).

Analyzing the complex problem of the Ukrainian-Polish confrontation during World War II, Professor O. Lysenko characterized the complex knot of contradictions on the Ukrainian-Polish border, a short-term policy of the Polish authorities towards the Ukrainians of the Polish Republic during the interwar period, outlined the loyalty problem of the Ukrainians to the Polish state. The researcher also pointed at the interests of Nazi Germany and the USSR, which actively used the "divide and rule" policy, harassing ethnic groups against each other. However, the scholar admits that the main responsibility for the flow of contradictions into "a hot phase" lies with the extremist part of the Polish and Ukrainian nationalist underground, for whom the idea of statehood weighed immeasurably more than the life of the enemy and their own (p. 187).

At the same time, O. Lysenko emphasized the difficulty of counting the victims of the Ukrainian-Polish interethnic conflict, pointing out the dubiousness of the statements of the Polish researchers Vladyslav and Eva Symashkiv, who estimate the Polish losses in Volyn at 33,000 people (almost 19,000 of them are known by name), and the total at 100,000. It is known that Volyn archivist Ya. Tsaruk personally visited all 97 settlements of Volodymyr-Volyn district and owing to a yard survey, it was determined that 1,454 Ukrainians were killed by "the Polish military formations" (1,244 with determined surnames), and 430 Poles died as a result of the Upiw actions (Siemashky give a different figure – 1,915). Ya. Tsaruk's research revealed a number of gaps, shortcomings and even distortions of facts by these researchers (pp. 201–202). It is important that O. Danylenko was against the use of the term "holocaust" by historians in relation to the Ukrainian-Polish conflict. In his opinion, only professional lawyers can draw conclusions about the existence of genocide. We, as reviewers, want to emphasize this opinion, because nowadays one of the popular Ukrainian historians resorts to using the scientifically incorrect term "mutual genocide" of the Ukrainians and the Poles.

In Section "Occupational Regimes on the Ukrainian Lands: Emergence and Destruction / Stabilization, Similarities and Differences", Professor Olena Stiazhkina noted, that unlike the occupied states and territories of Western Europe, where the invaders tried and/or were forced to comply with certain laws, the Ukrainian lands turned into a continuous territory of bloody arbitrariness, which was caused both by attitudes of aggressor countries leaders and by the behaviour of perpetrators of terror and lawlessness in the occupation zones. The occupiers "divided and conquered", designating groups and communities of enemies to be exterminated and groups and communities of those to whom life was offered in exchange for loyalty. Choosing between evil and evil, the occupied accepted the offer to survive under any

conditions and collaborated with the regimes both passively and, in some places, actively, becoming perpetrators of crimes organized by occupiers. All occupation regimes resorted to the same forms of humiliation and a physical or symbolic destruction of “enemies”: arrests, executions, hostages, deportations, terror by hunger, concentration camps absorbed and killed both “enemies” of the Nazi regime and “enemies” of the Soviet occupation. Being “in the shadow” of great criminals – Nazi Germany and the Stalinist USSR, the rest of the occupiers, in particular the Romanians and the Hungarians, committed the same evil (pp. 253–254).

The second part of the collective monograph contains chapters that cover the history of Ukraine in 1945 – 1990. It also begins with a chapter written by Olena Stiazhkina, who reflects on re-radianization and consequences of the “unfinished war”. The researcher interprets mass repressions against peoples in the USSR and Ukraine in 1944 – 1953 as a sign of the Russian Empire rebuilding, especially taking into account the change in the vector of Sovietness – from the state of classes to the state led by the Russian people. The researcher showed the persecution of the Jews in the USSR as an ethnic group of “traitors” who opposed the Soviet system (pp. 273–284). At the same time, the scholar pointed out the main components of the Soviet memory policy regarding World War II, in particular, the introduction of a single, Moscow-victorious view and the denial of trauma, inflicted on the national communities (the Ukrainians, the Poles, the Jews, the Germans, the Hungarians, etc.) precisely by the Bolshevik regime. The entire complex and systematic process of acquiring the historical memory of the war, the government’s monopolization of the interpretation of its experience and its transformation into a myth about the “Great Patriotic War” – determined its mental continuity on the Ukrainian territory in the form of historical wars. According to the President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid, World War II ended in 1994, “when the last echelons with the Soviet equipment left the country”. According to Professor O. Stiazhkina, World War II is still going on for Ukraine (pp. 318–319). We agree to this opinion and note that only the victory of Ukraine in the modern Russian-Ukrainian war will put an end to the wars of memory about World War II, which continued on the territory of our country during all the years of its independence.

The following four chapters were written by historians Viktor Danylenko and Viktor Krupyna. They describe the political system of Soviet Ukraine from the death of J. Stalin to the fall of the USSR, an everyday life of the population is characterized, the state of Ukraine’s economy in the coordinate system of the resource economy is elucidated. The sections of the monograph dedicated to joining of the Crimea to Ukraine and the struggle of the Crimean Tatars for rehabilitation and return to their historical homeland became important and new in the field of the Ukrainian historiography (we mean scientific syntheses) (the authors: Stanislav Kulchytsky and Larysa Yakubova). The researchers, in particular, noted that as a result of the mass deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944, the region once again experienced the destruction of the civilizational layer that had been built up for centuries. The post-war ethno-national history of the Crimea began practically from scratch. The fatal thing was that it took place in the Soviet extra-national context against the background of the formation of the Soviet myth about the Great Patriotic War. The post-war colonization of the Crimea turned into one of the largest demographic projects, which was carried out by the hands of the party-Soviet nomenclature and law enforcement agencies at an alarming pace under conditions of complete disregard for the interests and ethno-cultural requests of the population. As a result, during the 1940s and the 1950s, the youngest territorial community of Ukraine began to form in the Crimea, which appeared not as a result of the commonality

of historical, territorial and ethno-cultural origin, but was the embodiment of an artificial demographic project (p. 454).

In the section “Proclaimers of National Identity and Sovereignty”, Professor S. Kulchytsky talked about the phenomenon of the Ukrainian sixties and the dissident movements in Ukraine, and elucidated it in the context of the Ukrainian culture history of the second half of the 20th century. In particular, the scholar talked about the reaction of the Soviet authorities to Oles Honchar’s novel “The Cathedral” (pp. 487–490).

The monograph concludes with an intellectual historiosophical article by Professor S. Kulchytsky “The Leninist Commune State as a Tool for Building Communo-Socialism: Ontology of the Soviet Era”. The scholar denied Stalinism as a unique phenomenon in the history of the USSR, emphasizing its natural origins in Lenin’s policy of building the state-commune. In our opinion, the following thesis of the historian is important: “Russia still cannot recover from the consequences of Lenin’s experiment with the state-commune. The bulk of its citizens are, as before, economically, politically and spiritually dependent on state structures” (p. 499).

Despite the positive aspects of the monograph, it also contains certain shortcomings characteristic of collective scientific syntheses: episodic eclecticism, repetition of plots, lack of general conclusions. A certain problem is that the authors go beyond the chronological framework of the monograph many times (1939 – 1990). In our opinion, the year of 1991 should have been recognized as the upper limit of historical constructions – the year of independence declaration of Ukraine and the collapse of the USSR. We do not consider the title of the work to be entirely correct, because not only Ukraine, but also Poland, the Czech Republic, and East Germany were at the “epicenter of world systems confrontation” during the period under study. However, we believe that the peer-reviewed scientific study is a significant contribution to the formation of the latest historical visions of Ukraine’s past, the need for which is especially relevant at the current stage of development of the Ukrainian society and national historical science.

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