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**NEW RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE
IN WESTERN UKRAINE (review of the monograph: V. K. Baran,
Yu. M. Soroka, V. V. Tokarskyi. Stalin’s Repressions in the Western Lands of Ukraine
in 1939 – 1953. Lviv: I. Krypiakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies
of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2022. 296 p.)**

**НОВЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ДО ІСТОРІЇ СУСПІЛЬНО-ПОЛІТИЧНОГО ЖИТТЯ
ЗАХІДНОЇ УКРАЇНИ (Рецензія на монографію: Баран В. К., Сорока Ю. М.,
Токарський В. В. Сталінські репресії на західних землях України в 1939 – 1953 рр.
Львів: Інститут українознавства ім. І. Крип’якевича НАН України, 2022. 296 с.)**

The Russian-Ukrainian war made the need to study our past even more urgent. Especially, to do research on those periods that were falsified and kept silent for a long time, and the documentary material was classified as “top secret”. At the same time, to do research on those events, which will help the majority to understand not only the origins, but also the scope and further consequences of the Russian expansionist policy. The peer-reviewed monograph is aimed at solving these issues.

The monograph focuses on the review of the Soviet regime repressive policy in the western Ukrainian lands in 1939 – 1953. In particular, its content, forms and methods are elucidated, the resistance of local population to the Soviet totalitarian system is highlighted.

The monograph is written on the basis of unknown and little-known archival materials, in particular from the funds of the Central State Archive of the Higher Authorities and Administration of Ukraine, the Central State Archive of Public Associations of Ukraine, the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine, Lviv, the Branch State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine, the State Archive of Volyn Region, the State Archive of Lviv Region, the State Archive of Ternopil Region, the State Archive of Rivne Region, the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History, the Archive of the SBU Office in Volyn region.

The monograph consists of two chapters and eight paragraphs. Chapter 1 “The Introduction of Stalinist Repressions in the Western Ukrainian Lands: 1939 – 1941” (pp. 6–131) written by Volodymyr Baran and Vasył Tokarskyi focuses on the period of the first occupation of

Western Ukrainian lands (1. Establishment of the repressive system (pp. 6–43); 2. Struggle against the national underground (pp. 44–74); 3. Mass deportations of the population (pp. 75–100); 4. Ideological control over society (pp. 101–131)).

The authors emphasize that after the invasion of Western Ukraine, a complex sovietization process of the society's all spheres began (transfer of political, socio-economic, cultural and educational relations to the USSR model) with the establishment of a totalitarian model of socialism. At the same time, the local population had a far more ambiguous reaction to these events: some local residents sincerely welcomed the Red Army (mainly individual representatives of the working class and poor peasantry), the majority of the population treated the new administration cautiously, even with fear, another group took hostile or even an openly hostile position (p. 13).

At the same time, Volodymyr Baran and Vasyl Tokarsky highlight characteristic components of the processes that actively took place after the occupation – mass arrests, banning of political parties and public organizations, suspension of the activities of newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, introduction of a strict political and ideological censorship, collectivization, confiscation of landlord lands, nationalization of banks and big industry, i.e. a complete breakdown of the established way of life, which was mainly carried out by forceful methods (p. 14).

A separate item is dedicated to the Soviet administration's attempt to legitimize itself. In particular, it is about the organization and holding of the People's Assembly – a representative body for expressing the will of the population of Western Ukraine. However, they emphasize that in practice, the democratic nature of the elections was constantly violated, starting with the procedure of nominating candidates for deputies and ending with the order of voting and counting of votes (p. 19).

The authors focused on changes in the cultural and educational sphere. The changes were very ambiguous – a kind of Ukrainization of culture, science, and education began, but at the same time, the smallest manifestations of “the Ukrainian nationalism”, absence of freedom of speech, and introduction of the Bolshevik ideology were firmly eradicated.

Undoubtedly, a key role in these processes was played by the newly created power vertical – city, county and regional temporary administrations, which operated under a careful guidance of the Soviet military command, the party and state workers directed to the region by the Central Committee of the CP(b)U (p. 23).

We agree with the authors that the key role in all processes in the Soviet reality was played by the law enforcement agencies, which launched a large-scale political repression right from the first days. The authors' definition of this concept is marked by originality: “punitive measures were carried out by the state bodies in a judicial or administrative manner and were directed against various social, national, religious or other population groups and individuals who were interpreted as hostile to the ruling system of power.” At the same time, political repression took a variety of forms: from restricting the right to residence, expulsion from the place of a permanent residence (for exile, a special settlement, a forced psychiatric treatment, expulsion from the country, deprivation of citizenship, imprisonment) and up to execution (p. 26). Primarily, the Polish officials, military personnel, employees of law enforcement agencies, large landowners and manufacturers, members of legal, illegal political and public organizations (Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish) came under repression (p. 34). At the same time, the authors note the formation problem of the NKVD law enforcement apparatus network, the deployment of newcomers personnel, especially in law enforcement

agencies, the expansion of the agency network, a network of penitentiary institutions formation (in the system of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs in six western regions of the Ukrainian SSR, there were 22 prisons, etc. (p. 41))

The chief focus is on elucidating the struggle aspect of the repressive and punitive system against the nationalist underground. Characteristic components of this process were large-scale repression and terror – liquidation of the Ukrainian and Polish nationalist organizations, interception and operative use of channels through which couriers and emissaries penetrated, etc. However, even such events showed that, despite a large-scale repression and mass terror, the authorities were unable to get rid of and completely suppress the Ukrainian national and Polish movements (pp. 50, 74).

The authors analyse the structure of the OUN and the Polish underground in 1939 – 1941 (administrative and territorial, and intra-organizational division), network deployment, branching and training of personnel, functioning of special intelligence schools, crossing points, crossing the border, creation of warehouses with weapons and equipment (pp. 48, 59, 65). The Ukrainian and Polish underground carried out quite extensive political and propaganda activities, defending the interests of their peoples (carried out sabotage, attacks on representatives of the authorities) (p. 75). Even more, the Ukrainian nationalists carried out the preparation of the anti-Soviet uprising and countermeasures targeted at the Soviet repressive and punitive system, court trials (p. 52).

We agree with the authors that mass deportations became the largest repressive action against real or potential opponents. Thus, in the study there is analysed the process of preparation, implementation, and eviction campaigns; there are identified four deportation waves; there are singled out eviction features; there is traced deportation scale and process. **The first mass deportation** (on February 10, 1940) of settlers and “foresters”. **The second deportation** (on April 13, 1940) – the political “cleansing” of the annexed lands, after the imprisonment of the Polish officials, policemen, gendarmes, large landowners and entrepreneurs, leaders of political parties, public organizations, cultural societies, members of the Ukrainian and Polish national movements and their families (in the opinion of the authorities, they posed a potential danger), were subjected to the second mass eviction operation (pp. 81, 82). **The third deportation** (on June 25 – 29, 1940) was the operation to evict refugees (p. 94). **The fourth deportation** (on May – June of 1941) was the eviction of families of illegal immigrants and families of those sentenced to the highest degree of punishment. During the period of 1940 – 1941, 190,100 people were deported from Volyn, Drohobych, Lviv, Rivne, Stanislav, and Ternopil regions (during the first mass action (February of 1940) – 89,100 people, the second one – 32,100, the third one – 57,800), the fourth one – 11,100).

These processes were characterized by a careless filing of personal files for deportation, lack of time for individuals to gather, separation of members of the same family, their resettlement in different areas, loss of luggage of evicted people, etc. (p. 81). The authors emphasize administrative, extra-judicial nature of deportation, the so-called ontogeneity, targeting not of a specific person, but of certain social and national groups, as well as destruction by the authorities of an established way of life of large masses of people and imposition of a “socially safe” one on them, from the point of view of the ruling system, a way of behaviour and being (p. 101).

Changes in secondary and higher education, in the organization of scientific and cultural life of the region are analysed as well. First of all, changes in the content of educational process, structural transformations in the network of educational institutions, liquidation of

Ukrainian, Polish and other national societies, the Ukrainian, Polish and Jewish magazines, organization of theaters, music groups, houses of folk art and theatre and music institutions, music schools, museums and libraries, regional, city and district newspapers (in Russian and Ukrainian), use of radio, cinema, etc. (pp. 102, 107, 108, 112, 114).

A separate direction was the attack on religion and the church (the clergy and believers of various denominations), cessation of teaching religion at schools, closure of special religious schools, seminaries, prohibition to conduct spiritual services in hospitals and prisons, to serve in several parishes, confiscation of church and monastery property, deprivation of the right to register all acts of civil status, imposition of taxes, permission to conduct church services in the Church Slavonic language, and clerical affairs in dioceses – in Russian, the initiation of administrative and criminal cases, constant monitoring of the clergy of the UGCC, etc. (pp. 115, 117, 118).

Chapter 2 “Struggle of the Soviet Regime against Indigenous Population of the Western Ukrainian Lands: 1944–1953.” (pp. 132–277) by Yuri Soroka also consists of four subsections (1. Military Mobilization Measures in 1944 – 1945 (pp. 132–151); 2. Punitive Policy as a Tool of Subjugation (pp. 152–186); 3. International Deportations and Resettlement Actions (pp. 187–242); 4. Attempts to Denationalize the Western Ukrainian Lands (pp. 243–277)).

The author of the chapter primarily emphasizes the catastrophic consequences of the German occupation (the German invaders killed 1,596,000 people in the western regions, deported – 524,775), which was accompanied by mass massacres of the civilian population, its robbery and exploitation, punishment, etc. (pp. 133–134). The plot logically continued about the extensive system restoration of the party and Soviet bodies and power structures during the liberation of the territory of Western Ukraine from the Nazis.

The repressive policy pursued by the Soviet security forces against the population encountered resistance of the underground of the OUN and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

Immediately the Soviet administration introduced the transfer of grain, vegetables, fruits, meat and other products by peasants from their own stocks to the Red Army fund (p. 137). A total mobilization into the ranks of the Red Army in the western Ukrainian region began, which pursued not only a military, but also political goal: to bleed the social base of the UPA, to undermine and finally eliminate the national and patriotic sentiments of the local population. Although the author emphasizes several times that the position of the OUN in this regard was not unambiguous, at least initially. Thus, before the arrival of the Red Army, the OUN leadership took into account the possibility of mobilizations and even encouraged its members and sympathizers to join the Red Army ranks, hoping that they would be able to receive appropriate military training and return to the UPA with weapons, the possibility of propaganda work in the ranks of the Red Army was foreseen as well. However, the mobilization scale and its course clearly showed that it will simply bleed the Ukrainian population, deprive it of the reserve of a human replenishment (the ban on mobilized Ukrainian-Westerners from filling the ranks of their national armed forces, political “filtration” and ideological “cleansing”, inclusion in the labour army to perform the most difficult work) (pp. 140, 143, 150–151). Accordingly, a large-scale anti-mobilization campaign (in propaganda and armed forms) was launched.

Chief focus is on the issue of the post-war confrontation of the Ukrainian nationalists with the Soviet administration, which chose a punitive policy as a means of establishing itself in the western Ukrainian region. The author admits that it was the command-administrative, force methods, punitive and repressive system that became the basic reason for the long-term

resistance of the OUN underground and the UPA rebels and their widespread support by local residents (p. 154).

It was for the fight against the Ukrainian nationalists that ordinary and leading participants were sent to work in district authorities, military units (ChA, NKVD troops, etc.), partisan units (V. Behma, N. Taratuta, I. Shytov), creation of fighter battalions, which were popularly called “jumps” (the government provided them with social benefits and guarantees, exemption from paying taxes, military service, etc.), organization of an agent network, distribution of appeals, creation of special units (agent-military groups that acted under the guise of nationalists committed robberies, set fire to homes, kidnapped and murdered people, etc.), eviction of families of underground participants and their sympathizers, mobilization, arming of the Soviet assets, calls to underground participants to resign from the service, intimidation and threats, ambushes, lures, passportization, collectivization. The Soviet totalitarian regime liquidated the UGCC, inspired the escalation of inter-confessional enmity (p. 176). The author describes the preparation and conduct of deportation campaigns (primarily the Ukrainians and the Poles). Sometimes entire settlements were affected. The author also provides digital information on deportation campaigns. The bodies of the MVS, MDB, and the first secretaries of the party’s regional committees of the western regions were responsible for its implementation (pp. 174–175). There are cited specific references to normative documents that guided the Soviet security forces in organizing the fight against the Ukrainian nationalists.

At the same time, there were significant violations of the so-called “socialist legality” due to the lack of a legal control, permissiveness, drunkenness and low moral qualities of employees of criminal authorities (p. 161).

At the same time, the Ukrainian nationalists also changed their tactics – they divided their forces into fighting groups of several people.

Although citing a large amount of data, the author admits that the final determination of the OUN and UPA losses remains an unresolved issue, as well as a holistic understanding of their place and role in the Ukrainian and European movement of resistance to totalitarian regimes (p. 172).

The international aspect of the Soviet deportation and resettlement policy also found its reflection. In particular, the course, scope, and exchanges between Poland and the Ukrainian SSR (the autumn of 1944 – autumn of 1946) are considered. Problems that arose are singled out: reluctance of the Polish and Ukrainian population to leave their homes, untimely delivery of carriages (people staying at railway stations for 7 – 8 days, spread of epidemic diseases), the lack of elementary conditions in the carriages for transportation of people, collection of taxes by the Polish authorities, sometimes in advance, deployment of a real terror on the territory of Poland against the Ukrainian population by the Polish armed forces due to inaction or even support of the official authorities (arson of the Ukrainian farms, murders of the Ukrainians, theft of horses, livestock, food, clothes, etc.), repressive pressure of the NKVD against the Polish population in the territory of the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR, complete unpreparedness of the local Soviet and economic bodies regarding reception, resettlement and accommodation of the Ukrainians from Poland (1945), inequality of transfer and receipt of territory in exchange by the Soviet side to the Polish side (pp. 198, 200–201).

The author also describes the large-scale military and political deportation action of the Ukrainians “The Vistula” (which involved more than 20,000 soldiers, not including local security forces). Emphasizing the significant problems in its implementation (organization of transport, accommodation of people).

“The Vistula” operation was aimed, first of all, at weakening, and thus, eliminating (assimilating) the Ukrainian national minority in Poland.

In fact, the “The Vistula” operation belongs to the acts of ethnocide committed against the autochthonous population in the centre of Europe in the middle of the 20th century (p. 215).

Another post-war territorial transformation with resettlement of the local western Ukrainian population took place in 1944 between the USSR and Romania (the exchange of the population of the Ukrainian and Russian nationalities from the territory of Romania and the Romanians and the Jews from the western Ukrainian lands), in 1946 between the USSR and Czechoslovakia (on the resettlement of citizens of Ukrainian, Russian and Belarusian nationalities from the territory of the Czech Republic who settled here before 1939, and the Czechs and the Slovaks from the Soviet Union), in 1951 between the Ukrainian SSR and the Polish People’s Republic (pp. 231, 238).

The summarizing plot is devoted to the outline the Soviet administration measures to denationalize the inhabitants of Western Ukraine, which were carried out in parallel with industrialization, collectivization and other ideological, cultural and educational, political, spiritual transformations and aimed at a complete incorporation of the region into the USSR (p. 245). The appropriate structures formation to ensure all these measures took place at the expense of personnel sent from the eastern regions (although there was a constant problem with the provision of administrative, party, law enforcement structures, educational, cultural, industrial enterprises, collective farms with qualified personnel) (p. 254). The majority of these newcomers did not have required management skills, did not know and did not want to understand the local specifics.

The author also writes about the organized resistance of the peasantry to collectivization, as a result of its slow pace, which, in his opinion, made it possible to avoid famine in the western region (1946 – 1947) (pp. 258–259).

At the same time, the ideological measures carried out in the region were aimed at establishing moral and psychological control over the Western Ukrainian population, carrying out the so-called cultural revolution, with the aim of levelling the national and religious consciousness of residents and imposing the communist ideology (p. 261).

At the same time, the deportation and migration processes artificially conceived by the totalitarian system led to profound changes in the ethnic composition of the region’s population. To the measures already mentioned, the resettlement of the workforce from the western region, there was added sending people to the eastern and southern regions of the Ukrainian SSR to support the industry (deported families faced a difficult material and moral and psychological situation, unusual climatic conditions, household and economic difficulties) (p. 275). Political motives were also pursued – to stratify the local population, to divert part of them from national and patriotic aspirations, to limit the ranks of the UPA by replenishment. In general, during the post-war years, more than 2 million people – the Ukrainians, the Poles, the Czechs, the Slovaks, the Jews, the Romanians, the Bulgarians, etc. – were involved in the process of forced resettlement and deportation on the territory of Western Ukrainian lands (p. 276). In this way, the goal was set to change the national composition radically. At the end of the 1950s, representatives of 40 different nationalities lived in the western regions of Ukraine (the Uzbeks, the Georgians, the Azerbaijanis, the Bashkirs, the Mordvins, the Ossetians, the Chuvash, etc. representatives of other peoples who did not live here before) (p. 277).

The originality of the authors’ opinion is also noted that despite all the local population managed to preserve its spiritual and socio-psychological peculiarity and act as a unifying

factor of the Ukrainian people as a public community at the end of the 20th – the beginning of the 21st centuries (p. 279).

Noting the obvious positive aspects of the monograph and an unequivocal recommendation to all interested parties, its analysis caused several considerations. The monograph lacks an introduction and summarizing conclusions. Taking into account a number of proper names in the monograph, we consider it expedient to provide name and geographical indexes, which would facilitate the research much. The study would benefit from its presentation in a separate block of appendix.

In conclusion, we emphasize that the peer-reviewed monograph by V. Baran, Yu. Soroka, and V. Tokarskyi “Stalin’s Repressions in the Western Lands of Ukraine in 1939 – 1953” is original, interesting and meaningful. We believe that the monograph will be important and significant not only for professional historians, but primarily for students, teachers, high school students, as well as everyone who is interested in the history of Ukraine and especially the period of 1939 – 1953 (the authors of the study hope for). Moreover, the authors present not only a mere array of historical facts, but also encourage the formation of one’s own holistic view of complex pages of the past.

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