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**UKRAINIAN SSR WORKING CLASS (1946-1965)  
IN THE MODERN NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHIC TRADITION**

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**Abstract**

The article examines the modern national historiography of Ukrainian working-class issues of the postwar 20 century (1946-1965). The existence of several methodological levels, the highest of which is philosophical, is the historiographical research specificity. The authors of the article used analysis and synthesis from the list of this group methods. The next level is considered to comprise general scientific methods, of which the method of classification and typologization and the method of idealization (abstraction) were used. Special historical methods are the third gradation of the methods. The research tools of the proposed work include historical and genetic, chronological, problematic and chronological, biographical, comparative historical methods, as well as methods of periodization, content analysis, dialectic of retrospective and prospective analysis.

The authors of the article conclude that the main thesis of the modern national historiography of the problem is the statement that the postwar economic recovery was carried out on a predominantly extensive basis. More than 90% of workers at Ukrainian industrial enterprises achieved production standards mainly by manual labor. Lack of proper safety precautions often resulted in significant injuries. Much was said about the working-class leading role in the society, but little was done to ensure that workers actually managed the enterprises. To a certain extent, this was facilitated by the permanent mobilization and propaganda activities carried out by that period regime, inspiring “socialist competition” and various kinds of “movement of shock workers and innovators.” People’s real, everyday enthusiasm, their readiness for another sacrifice in the name of a better future were closely intertwined with the formalism and demagoguery inherent in the communist system.

The overwhelming majority of contemporary Ukrainian historians support the idea that by rebuilding the economy, people were reviving a normal life for themselves and their children, while the system attributed everything primarily to the “highest interests of the Bolshevik Revolution homeland.” Living and working conditions of people were difficult. Nevertheless, people believed in a better life. This feeling also increased as workers saw that thanks to their valiant labor the country was gradually overcoming enormous difficulties and solving extremely complex tasks of the destroyed economy reviving. However, J. Stalin and his entourage, trying to strengthen the

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totalitarian regime, rejected the possibility of the country's development in a democratic direction, and so did those forces interested in preserving the command economy and vulgarized forms of ideology. At the same time, to the researchers' point of view, it was also crucial that the mass consciousness had no experience of living in a society developing on the principles of democracy, which in itself hindered the understanding of the need for a radical renewal of the entire political system.

**Keywords:** Ukrainian SSR, working class, postwar reconstruction, historiography

## РОБІТНИЦТВО УРСР (1946–1965 РР.) У СУЧАСНІЙ ВІТЧИЗНЯНІЙ ІСТОРІОГРАФІЧНІЙ ТРАДИЦІЇ

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### Анотація

У статті досліджується сучасна вітчизняна історіографія української робітничої тематики повоєнного двадцятиріччя (1946–1965 рр.). Специфікою історіографічного дослідження є наявність декількох методологічних рівнів, вищий з яких – філософський. З переліку методів цієї групи нами використані аналіз і синтез. Наступним рівнем вважаються загальнонаукові методи, з яких ми послуговувалися методом класифікації й типологізації та методом ідеалізації (абстрагування). Спеціально-історичні методи займають третю сходинку в градації методів. У складі інструментарію запропонованої роботи застосовані історико-генетичний, хронологічний, проблемно-хронологічний, біографічний, порівняльно-історичний методи, а також методи періодизації, контент-аналізу, діалектизм ретроспективного і перспективного аналізу.

Автори статті прийшли до висновку, що головною тезою сучасної вітчизняної історіографії проблеми є твердження про те, що повоєнне відновлення економіки здійснювалось на переважно екстенсивній основі. Понад 90% робітників промислових підприємств України досягали норм виробітку переважно ручною працею. Відсутність належної техніки безпеки часто призводила до значного травматизму. Багато йшлося про провідну роль робітничого класу в суспільстві, але мало робилося, щоб робітники реально господарювали на підприємствах. Певною мірою всьому цьому сприяли перманентні мобілізаційно-пропагандистські заходи, що їх здійснював тодішній режим, інспіруючи «соціалістичне змагання» та різного роду «рух передовиків і новаторів виробництва». Реальний, повсякденний ентузіазм людей, їх готовність до чергової самопожертви в ім'я кращого майбуття – все це тісно перепліталося з іманентно притаманними комуністичній системі формалізмом і демагогією.

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Переважна більшість сучасних вітчизняних істориків підтримують позицію відносно того, що відбудовуючи господарство, люди відроджували, в першу чергу, нормальне життя для себе і своїх дітей, а система списувала все, насамперед, на «найвищі інтереси батьківщини Жовтня». Важкими були умови, в яких працювали і жили люди, але їх підтримувала віра в краще життя. Це почуття зміцнювалося ще й тому, що трудящі бачили, як завдяки їх звитяжній праці країна поступово долала величезні труднощі, розв'язувала надзвичайно складні завдання відродження зруйнованого господарства. Однак Й. Сталін та його оточення, намагаючись зміцнити тоталітарний режим, відкидали можливість розвитку країни в демократичному напрямку. Цього не хотіли й ті сили, які зацікавлені в збереженні командної економіки і вульгаризованих форм ідеології. Водночас на думку дослідників, принципове значення мало і те, що в масовій свідомості не було досвіду життя в суспільстві, що розвивається на принципах демократизму, що само по собі перешкоджало розумінню необхідності радикального оновлення всієї політичної системи.

**Keywords:** УРСР, робітничий клас, повоєнна відбудова, історіографія

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**Problem statement.** According to contemporary historians, it is the postwar period of Stalinism that became its apogee. It had a significant impact on the future development of the Ukrainian people, and the years 1945-1953 were important, defining milestones in its history: the further consolidation of the totalitarian regime and the beginning of de-Stalinization. It is from these starting points that contemporary national historiography studies the Soviet postwar period. The absence of ideological and bureaucratic obstacles and the presence of completely new conditions for scientific creativity contributed to the development of subtopics that were impossible to study in the Soviet era. In the modern national historical science, there is a critical rethinking of the entire Soviet historiography state in general and the working class of the Ukrainian SSR in particular. However, at the same time, we note a significant decline in interest in summarizing historiographical results within certain periods.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Various aspects that are indirectly identical to the subject of our study are contained in the dissertations of V. Pavlenko, Yu. Nikolaiets, historiographical sections by O. Dodonov<sup>1</sup>, O. Surhai<sup>2</sup>, Ya. Hrytsak<sup>3</sup>, and D. Nefodov<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Dodonov O.F. A New Vision of the Periodization of the History of the Soviet Working Class and its Historiography. *Kulturologichnyi vestnik: Scientific and Theoretical Yearbook of the Lower Naddniproianshchyna*. Issue 8. Zaporizhzhia: Prosvita, 2002. pp. 67-74; Dodonov O.F. Soviet Historiography on the Judgments of Western Researchers on the Role and Political Activity of the Working Class in the 60s-80s of the Twentieth Century: Scientific and Theoretical Yearbook of the Lower Naddniproianshchyna. Issue 10. Zaporizhzhia: Prosvita, 2003. pp. 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> Surhai O. Training of skilled workers in vocational education institutions of Ukraine in the 20-50s of the twentieth century (historiography of the problem). *Visnyk of History*. Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University. 2006. Issues 85-86. pp. 49-52.

**The purpose of the article.** The authors aim to study the modern national historiography of Ukrainian working-class issues of the postwar twenty years (1946–1965).

**Presentation of the main research material.** One of the sub-topics that Soviet historians have hardly studied is the use of labor of prisoners of war, internees, returned repatriates, and Ostarbeiters. Such scholars as M. Loboda<sup>5</sup>, A. Tchaikovsky<sup>6</sup>, D. Aleksieieva-Protsiuk<sup>7</sup>, O. Potylchak<sup>8</sup>, and N. Kalkutina<sup>9</sup> paid great emphasis to this issue.

D. Aleksieieva-Protsiuk's scientific work represents a thorough study of the prerequisites, causes, practical tasks, features, forms and methods of organization, development and functioning of the system of accommodation, maintenance, provision and labor exploitation of contingents under protection on the territory of Ukraine. The researcher emphasized the specifics that distinguished the territory of the Ukrainian SSR in terms of placement, maintenance, and provision of prisoners of war and internees. The enormous destruction created problems with the organization and arrangement of camps and the provision of prisoners with the bare necessities. At the same time, the scale of reconstruction work determined the density of deployment of significant special contingents, primarily in the industrialized East and South of Ukraine<sup>10</sup>. The researcher characterizes the typical problems affecting the state of the labor resources of prisoners of war and internees, the efficiency of their labor, which remained in the postwar period,

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<sup>3</sup> Hrytsak Ya. Ukrainian historiography. 1991–2001: A decade of changes. Modern Ukraine. Kyiv; Lviv. 2005. Vol. 9. pp. 43–68.

<sup>4</sup> Nefodov D. The Ukrainian SSR postwar working class (1946–1965) in the evaluation of the sovietology in the west. *East European Historical Bulletin*. Drohobych: Helvetica. 2018. Issue 7. pp. 160–172. URL: <http://eehb.dspu.edu.ua/article/view/130665/133510>; Nefodov D.V. Ukrainian Workers of the Postwar Period (1946–1965) in the Historiography of the Diaspora. Pages of history: Collection of scientific papers. Issue 49. 2019. pp. 179–190. URL: [http://history-pages.kpi.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/49\\_13\\_Nefiodov.pdf](http://history-pages.kpi.ua/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/49_13_Nefiodov.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Loboda M.K. The use of labor resources in the reconstruction of heavy industry of Ukraine (1943–1950): Candidate of Historical Sciences: 07.00.01. K., 2007. 234 p.; Loboda M.K. Labor resources in the heavy industry of Ukraine during the Nazi occupation and in the reconstruction period (1941–1950). K.: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. 2012. 206 p.

<sup>6</sup> Tchaikovsky A.S. Captivity. For the sins of others and their own (Prisoners of War and internees in Ukraine in 1939–1953). Kyiv: Parliamentary Publishing House, 2005. 972 p.

<sup>7</sup> Aleksieieva-Protsiuk D.O. The use of labor of foreign prisoners of war and internees on the territory of Ukraine (1939–1953): regulatory and organizational principles. Kyiv: Prosvita, 2011. 240 p.; Aleksieieva-Protsiuk D.O. Organization of maintenance and labor use of foreign prisoners of war and internees on the territory of Ukraine (1939–1953): PhD thesis: 07.00.01. Kyiv, 2008. 250 p.

<sup>8</sup> Potylchak O.V. Soviet regime institutions for prisoners of war and internees in the Ukrainian SSR (1939–1954): organization, location, structure: PhD thesis for the degree of Doctor of History: specialty 07.00.01 “History of Ukraine”. Kyiv, 2005. 22 p.

<sup>9</sup> Kalkutina N.V. Participation of prisoners of war of Germany and its allies in the post-war reconstruction of Southern Ukraine (1944–1950): Candidate of Historical Sciences: 07.00.01. Mykolaiv, 2015. 265 p.

<sup>10</sup> Aleksieieva-Protsiuk D. Organization of maintenance...

among which she primarily mentions lack of housing for workers, unsatisfactory food, household and logistical support, violations of safety organization, misuse of specialists, distraction by minor secondary work, poor organization of work, lack of work clothes, tools and equipment. Despite all the problems, D. Aleksieieva-Protsiuk provides data according to which the overall performance of the labor use of prisoners of war during 1946–1953 improved significantly. General trends showed positive dynamics in the growth of the labor force and increased labor productivity.

The scientist explains that improvement of prisoners' living conditions, nutrition, medical care, and material incentives for shock workers were not the only factors that increased the efficiency of their labor use. According to the historian, adding demands to the labor organization and safety at work was equally important. After the war, the scope of the use of prisoners of war and internees in specialized labor expanded. Among other things, the establishment of professional training through a network of special courses contributed to the increase in their labor productivity. The postwar period was characterized by a tendency toward a certain "liberalization" of the prisoner labor organization. The use of small groups of prisoners, along with the civilian population, became widespread. The researcher comes to the conclusion that prisoners of war and internees placed on the territory of the Ukrainian SSR constituted a significant and important contingent of labor resources, which was used quite effectively in the restoration of the economy destroyed by the war.

Their total number from 1944 to 1953 was about 500 thousand, which was about a quarter of the total number of these special contingents in the USSR. Characterizing their contribution to the postwar reconstruction as significant, the author emphasizes that the main burden of the reconstruction period fell on the Soviet citizens' shoulders<sup>11</sup>.

The participation of prisoners of war of Germany and its allies in the postwar reconstruction of southern Ukraine is the subject of N. Kalkutina's<sup>12</sup> dissertation. In the course of her research, the scientist found out that the brigade form with partial self-management was the main form of labor organization for prisoners of war. According to N. Kalkutina, this method of managing the labor collective was ineffective due to the lack of the captive brigadiers' interest in increasing labor productivity, who, taking advantage of the camp administrations' and state authorities' lack of control, did not encourage their subordinates to do so. The historian supports the idea that state authorities using the special contingent violated almost all labor organization form. In the course of the study, the researcher found out that the scale of reconstruction work in southern Ukraine determined the priority of concentrating significant special contingents in this region.

The analysis of the sectors of their use showed that prisoners' labor resources were mainly used at shipbuilding and metallurgical enterprises. Among other enterprises where prisoners worked were machine-building enterprises, energy companies, and large construction organizations responsible for civilian construction, rebuilding ports and

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. P. 194–195.

<sup>12</sup> Kalkutina N.V. Participation of prisoners of war of Germany....

transportation routes. The historian N. Kalkutina estimates that the proportion of prisoners of war in the total number of workers at the region's enterprises ranged from 50 to 80%. By 1947, the share of prisoners of war in the South in the total labor pool assigned to the enterprises and construction sites of the republic was already 23%. Thus, it was the special contingent of the NKVD (MIA) camps that became the powerful production core of the first postwar five-year plan.

O. Potylchak's research proves that the forced deportation of hundreds of thousands of foreigners (mainly ethnic Germans) to the territory of the Ukrainian SSR was carried out in order to provide cheap labor for the reconstruction of strategically important economy sectors. Interned foreigners were used mainly in labor-intensive industries, such as the coal industry and ferrous metallurgy of the Ukrainian SSR. The government considered the territory of the republic to be the most important resource and industrial base for the deployment of the "labor pool" of internees.

The researcher has established that in 1945-1949, in nine eastern, southern, and central regions of the Ukrainian SSR 180 separate work battalions (SWBs) were created to accommodate and exploit mobilized and interned foreign citizens. In particular, there were 79 SWBs in Stalin Region, 46 in Voroshylovhrad Region, 36 in Dnipro Region, 11 in Zaporizhzhia Region, 4 in Odesa Region, and one per Kirovohrad and Vinnytsia Regions. According to the most conservative estimates, about 220 000 people passed through this network, which was more than 75% of all foreigners having the status of "interned and mobilized persons"<sup>13</sup> and being in the Soviet Union. The researcher M. Loboda proved the fact that the spread of "free" forced labor created the illusion of its cheapness. The historian came to the conclusion that the costs of maintaining paramilitary guards, camp administration, inefficiency of exhausted people who worked, as a rule, not in their specialty, without appropriate machines and tools, and without material incentives made the cost of finished products higher than at enterprises where freelance workers were employed<sup>14</sup>.

S. Halchak's<sup>15</sup> thorough doctoral research is devoted to such a complex and poorly understood issue as the situation of civilian forced laborers of the Reich in Ukraine. The Soviet government saw millions of repatriates as an important reserve of labor to rebuild the country's destroyed economy. The historian convincingly proved that despite the repatriates' rights and freedoms declared by the Soviet state, in real life the political status of a person returning to the USSR from abroad was in fact not much different from a criminal: the same conversations with NKVD and NKGB officers, the opening of a special "case", and a ban on living in capital cities. Concurrently, the scholar notes that at the same time, during the filtration process, the issue of using each repatriate to the maximum

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<sup>13</sup> Potylchak O.V. Soviet regime institutions for prisoners of war...

<sup>14</sup> Loboda M.K. The use of labor resources in the reconstruction of heavy industry in Ukraine...

<sup>15</sup> Halchak S.D. The Status of Civilian Forced Laborers of the Reich in Ukraine (1945-2010): Historical, Social, Domestic and Legal Aspects: PhD thesis for the degree of Doctor of History: specialty 07.00.01 "History of Ukraine". Kyiv, 2012. 40 p.

benefit of the USSR was decided, and a large number of repatriates were sent to work battalions that were used in the reconstruction and operation of the Donbas mines, industrial centers of the republic and the USSR as a whole<sup>16</sup>.

The researcher states that all those who arrived in their homeland needed financial assistance from both the state and local economic authorities. However, according to the historian, despite the “allocation” of financial aid to local budgets, repatriates never received it. In the course of his research, S. Halchak inferred that, in addition to the objective difficulties associated with the postwar ruin, repatriates constantly had to endure insults, unfounded suspicions, and even open contempt from the heads of enterprises. Upon returning home, the Ostarbeiter-workers did not become free people as they expected, but turned out to be rightless executors of the will of the command and control system. They were required to work hard everywhere, to unconditionally fulfill the labor boundaries drawn by the party-state authorities. Comparing the situation of repatriates in the Khrushchev era, the researcher notes that it changed for the better due to the easing of the passport regime, the implementation of a number of social programs, and the improvement of housing conditions. However, the Ostarbeiters never felt like “full-fledged members of the glorious big family of socialist builders”<sup>17</sup>.

Some working-class motives can be found in monographs by H. Kasianov<sup>18</sup>, M. Shytiuk<sup>19</sup>, V. Ivanenko<sup>20</sup>, and B. Zakharov<sup>21</sup> devoted to repression and the dissident movement activities. In a number of works on the opposition movement, one can see some parts dedicated to the workers’ participation in the dissent movement. First of all, these are the works of O. Bazhan and Yu. Danyliuk<sup>22</sup>, I. Stasiuk<sup>23</sup>, A. Rusnachenko<sup>24</sup>, V. Kononenko<sup>25</sup>,

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. P. 26.

<sup>18</sup> Kasianov H. Dissenters: Ukrainian Intellectuals in the Resistance Movement of the 1960s-80s. Kyiv: Lybid, 1995. 224 p.

<sup>19</sup> Shytiuk M.M. Mass repressions against the population of the South of Ukraine in the 20-50s of the twentieth century. Kyiv: TETRA, 2000. 550 p.

<sup>20</sup> Ivanenko V.V. Pain and Victory: The twentieth century in the Ukrainian dimension. Dnipropetrovsk: ART-PRESS, 2003. 332 p.

<sup>21</sup> Zakharov B. Essay on the History of the Dissident Movement in Ukraine (1956-1987). Kharkiv: Folio, 2003. 144 p.

<sup>22</sup> Bazhan O. Repressive Activities of the VUNK-DPU-NKVD-KGB in the Kyiv Region in the 1919-1980s. *From the archives of the VUCHK-GPU-NKVD-KGB*. 2011. P. 156-234; Bazhan O. Ukrainian National Movement: Main Trends and Stages of Development (late 1950s - 1980s). Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. 2000. 232 p.; Danyliuk Y. Opposition in Ukraine (second half of the 50s - 80s of the twentieth century). Kyiv: Ridnyi Krai, 2000. 616 p.

<sup>23</sup> Stasiuk I.M. Ukrainian national-patriotic movement in the Ukrainian SSR (mid-1950s - late 1980s): Candidate of Historical Sciences: 07.00.01. Lviv. 2002. 218 p.

<sup>24</sup> Rusnachenko A.M. National Liberation Movement in Ukraine (mid-1950s - early 1990s): PhD thesis for the degree of Doctor of History: specialty 07.00.01 “History of Ukraine”. Kyiv, 1999. 57 p.

M. Mozgovskiy<sup>26</sup>, and O. Rabenchuk<sup>27</sup>. The scholar S. Vasylenko in his dissertation examines the repressive policy of the authorities directed against various categories of workers, primarily those who during the war betrayed the Motherland or remained on the occupied territory or were forced to work in Germany; violated labor discipline or jeopardized the implementation of plans; showed dissatisfaction or at least to some extent disliked the authorities. In the first postwar years, a large number of repatriates were especially subjected to repression. According to the researcher's estimates, 1,334,425 repatriates passed through regional collection and transfer points from July 1, 1945, to January 1, 1946, including 1,128,561 civilians (85%). Of the 1,250,000 Ukrainians who returned from hard labor in Germany, 360,000 were sent to camps as "traitors to the Motherland." Those who remained free experienced constant difficulties with employment, registration, housing, etc. Each questionnaire included a special column in which citizens had to indicate whether they or their close relatives were in captivity or on the occupied territory. The study examines the former repatriates' conditions in work battalions, where they were sent forcibly. In the Voroshilovgrad region alone, 60.6 thousand repatriates representing 51 nationalities were sent to worker battalions. Most often, the workers were sent to build up and operate Donbas mines or to work in timber cutting<sup>28</sup>.

The researcher A. Rusnachenko attempted to comprehensively analyze the national liberation movement in Ukraine in the mid-1950s and early 1990s. The historian emphasizes that it was the labor movement that showed significant resistance to the system of power during this period. Workers' sporadic and unorganized strikes in the postwar period later developed into a powerful labor movement opposing totalitarianism and the power of the Communist Party. The work is the first to document the origins of labor resistance, and later of the movement, after the completion of the industrial working class on its own base. A. Rusnachenko describes in detail the fact that workers, despite their participation in almost all party bodies, never had a dominant influence in them, and the percentage of their representation there was lower than their number in the party as a whole. In other words, the claims of propaganda about the Communist Party being the party of workers was not true<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Kononenko V.V. Socio-political moods and moral state of the population of Ukraine in the postwar period (1945-1953): Candidate of Historical Sciences: 07.00.01. Vinnytsia, 2004. 231 p.

<sup>26</sup> Mozgovskiy M.V. Struggle of the totalitarian system against the figures of Ukrainian science and culture in the postwar period (1946-1953): Candidate of Historical Sciences: 07.00.01. Kharkiv, 2005. 223 p.

<sup>27</sup> Rabenchuk O. Social activity and moods of the population of Ukraine in the postwar period (second half of the 1940s - early 1950s). *Ukraine of the twentieth century: culture, ideology, politics*: Collection of articles. Kyiv, 2007. Issue 12. pp. 324-339.

<sup>28</sup> Vasylenko S.M. Post-war repressions against the population of Ukraine (1944-1953): PhD thesis for the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences: specialty 07.00.01 "History of Ukraine". Zaporizhzhia, 2011. P. 10.

<sup>29</sup> Rusnachenko A.M. National Liberation Movement in Ukraine (mid-1950s - early 1990s): PhD thesis for the degree of Doctor of History: specialty 07.00.01 "History of Ukraine". Kyiv, 1999. P. 18.

The researcher O. Dodonov made an attempt to study the characteristic features of workers' participation in the socio-political life of the USSR in the postwar period, to reveal the dynamics of quantitative and qualitative growth of the CPSU, workers' representation in it and its governing bodies, the degree of their participation in the definition and implementation of the party's policy, as well as to identify the causes of deformations in their relations, to show workers' participation in the management of public affairs through the Soviets and the Young Communist League (Komsomol), and to highlight the search for ways to increase the workers' deputies' activity in solving socio-political, economic, and cultural challenges they faced, and to identify developments and problems that existed in this area. O. Dodonov proves that workers did not constitute the majority of the CPSU members, did not play a decisive role in its governing bodies, and did not significantly influence the nature of the party's actions or political tactics. By its very nature, the CPSU did not become a political party of the working class. It was not the party of the entire Soviet people, and could not become so in the context of the growing property stratification and sharp polarization of the population and party members into rich and poor, and the merging of part of the leadership with the criminal underworld. According to the scholar, the CPSU consisted of two parties: "the party of the top" and "the party of the bottom," which had far from common interests and goals<sup>30</sup>. The researcher concluded that in the process of workers' participation in state governance during the period under study, two trends were manifested. The first was that committees of the CPSU and the Council of People's Deputies proclaimed the need to democratize public administration and develop people's self-government, and many of them carried out specific work to involve shock workers in performing various state functions. The second tendency was the gradual strengthening of the party-state bureaucracy, which viewed the activities of representative bodies and activists of the Soviets only as an "auxiliary means" of implementing the instructions of the upper echelons of power, and not as a basic element of the system of state administration<sup>31</sup>. Highlighting the practical activities of the Young Communist League (Komsomol) committees and organizations involving young workers in public life, as well as their failures and difficulties, the researcher noted that the bureaucratic model of educating the younger generation restrained the manifestation of the workers' social energy, created indifference to politics, and led to their loss of civic dignity and intellectual courage. O. Dodonov's main conclusion is that the degree of influence of the working class on socio-political processes in the USSR in the postwar period is not equivalent to the historical role it objectively had to play in industrial, socio-political, spiritual and cultural life, as well as the needs and trends of society.

The tumultuous events of 2013–2022 stimulated the emergence of a number of works on the history of the southeastern region of Ukraine, primarily Donbas and the Crimea.

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<sup>30</sup> Dodonov O.F. Participation of workers in the political life of the USSR. 1961-1991: author's dissertation for the degree of Doctor of History: specialty 07.00.02 "World History". Dnipropetrovsk, 2001. P. 17.

<sup>31</sup> Dodonov O.F. Participation of workers in the political life of the USSR... P. 20.

First of all, these are the works of Ya. Vermenych<sup>32</sup>, L. Yakubova<sup>33</sup>, V. Ablitsov<sup>34</sup>, I. Dziuba<sup>35</sup>, V. Holovko<sup>36</sup>, and a lot of collective monographs. The authors tried to find answers to contemporary questions in history, and attempted to find the causes of the tragic events of our time, including in the postwar history of the region. As the authors of the study “Donbas and the Crimea: A Place in the Modern National Project (Analytical Note)” aptly noted, understanding the peculiarities of regional communities, without exaggeration, may be a key factor in an adequate interpretation of the situation and a way out of the crisis. Under these circumstances, the scientific relevance of studying the historical circumstances of formation and distinctive features of the phenomenon of regional communities in Donbas and the Crimea is undeniable<sup>37</sup>. During the famine of 1946-1947, Donbas attracted workers with guaranteed food supplies to enterprises. According to estimates by national researchers, 22-32 thousand people arrived in the region every month in the second half of 1946, and 15-25 thousand people every month in the first half of 1947, and at the same time there was a steadily decrease in mechanical growth. However, the population turnover was growing, especially due to desertion from enterprises, which became widespread<sup>38</sup>. Contemporary scholars have found out that organized migration became the main source of labor for the reconstruction of the Donbas industrial complex, the creation of a stable working class, and eventually became an important factor in the

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<sup>32</sup> Vermenych Ya.V. Donbas in the context of borderland theories: socio-humanitarian analysis. *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. 2015. No. 1. P. 108-134; Vermenych Ya.V. Donbas as a borderland region: territorial dimension. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. 69 p.; Vermenych Ya.V. Southern Ukraine on the Civilizational Frontier / edited by V.A. Smolii. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. 2015. 482 p.; Vermenych Ya.V. Southern Ukraine: Interaction of States and Cultures on the Civilizational Frontier. Analytical note / edited by V.A. Smolii. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. 81 p.; Vermenich Ya.V. Search for models of consolidation of the Ukrainian nation at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a view from more than a century's distance. Analytical Report / Edited by V. Smolii. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. 2016. 99 p.

<sup>33</sup> Yakubova L.D. Ethno-national history of Donbas: trends, contradictions, prospects in the light of the current stage of Ukrainian nation-building. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. 2014. 109 p.

<sup>34</sup> Ablitsov V. Donbas: European Ukraine or Asian wilderness? Kyiv, Institute of History NAS Ukraine, 2014. 97 p.

<sup>35</sup> Dziuba I.M. Donetsk wound of Ukraine: Historical and Cultural Essays. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. 78 p.

<sup>36</sup> Holovko V. “The Burden of the Post-Soviet Man”: a Historiographical Image of Donetsk Identity. *Historiographical Studies in Ukraine. Collection of scientific works*. Issue 24. K., 2014. P. 38-50.

<sup>37</sup> Smolii V. Donbas and Crimea: a place in the modern national project (analytical note) / V. Smolii, S. Kulchytskyi, L. Yakubova. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2016. P. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Donbas in the Ethno-Political Dimension. Kyiv: I.F. Kuras Institute of Political and Economic Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2014. P. 79.

region's population. This played a fatal role in the history of Donbas, causing distortions and deformation of the processes of natural reproduction of society in all its components: socio-economic, socio-political, and ethno-cultural<sup>39</sup>.

Researcher Ya. Vermenych rightly noted that the disharmonious development of urbanization processes was manifested primarily in the hypertrophied development of industrial centers in Southern Ukraine, while in other regions the pace of urbanization was much slower. The development of social, engineering, and transportation infrastructure lagged far behind the pace of industrial construction. The scholar considers the fact that the urbanization process was incomplete, flawed, and one-sided as the result of industrialization that was not designed to meet people's needs<sup>40</sup>. The historian argues that although the concepts of modernization and urbanization carry a positive charge, urbanization processes themselves do not ensure social progress. In contrast to intensive, civilized urbanization, which forms a developed urban environment, Soviet urbanization was purely extensive, providing only one-sided, military-industrial or fuel and raw material growth. This direction of urbanization led to the emergence of the settlements that were called cities but in fact became giant workers' villages<sup>41</sup>. At the same time, the conclusion of the scholar L. Yakubova, who emphasized that the ethno-national structure of Donbas in its present form was established in the second half of the twentieth century, is noteworthy. The essence of ethno-national processes in the region was determined by the Russian-Ukrainian cultural competition, supported, and even provoked, by the Soviet authorities. The constant "infusion" of the population and its extreme mobility made Donbas residents the most amenable to the widely propagated myth of the emergence of a new historical supranational community – the "Soviet people"<sup>42</sup>.

In the course of their research, national scholars have concluded that the Soviet era played a key role in the formation of its current problems<sup>43</sup>. They emphasize that until the imaginary Donbas gets rid of the victim complex in the sense of Ukraine's benefactor and realizes its real status as a victim of the communist regime, its future will remain under

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<sup>39</sup> Kulchytskyi S. Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the XVII-XXI centuries: historical factors and political technologies of formation of the special and the general in the regional space / S. Kulchytskyi, L. Yakubova. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. 637 p.

<sup>40</sup> Vermenych Y.V. Southern Ukraine on the Civilizational Frontier / edited by V. Smolii. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. 368 p.

<sup>41</sup> Vermenych Y.V. Donbas as a border region: territorial dimension. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. P. 50.

<sup>42</sup> Yakubova L.D. Ethno-national history of Donbas: trends, contradictions, prospects in the light of the modern stage of Ukrainian nation-building. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2014. P. 98.

<sup>43</sup> Smolii V. Donetsk and Luhansk regions: a place in the modern Ukrainian national project. Analytical Report. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2015. P. 36.

threat. The Soviet history of Donbas shows that without consistent humanization and democratization of social life, socio-economic modernization and urbanization become an empty sound. If the idea of economic progress is not subordinated to the goal of social progress in general, and human progress in particular, it loses its meaning. Despite the ostentatiously internationalist appearance of the Stalinist government, it was a powerful factor in the denationalization processes, which were based on catch-up modernization. In fact, in all its practices, it embodied the Bolshevik concept of inevitable, and even historically progressive assimilation. But since the cities of Donbas never actually became full-fledged centers of urbanization, but only settlements “near” a mine/factory, ethno-social and ethno-cultural processes here mutated unpredictably. Assimilation took place on an extremely limited social basis with all the inevitable consequences<sup>44</sup>.

**Conclusions.** Thus, contemporary Ukrainian researchers have proved that the postwar economic recovery was carried out on a mainly extensive basis. More than 90% of workers at Ukrainian industrial enterprises achieved production quotas mostly by manual labor. Lack of appropriate safety measures often led to serious injuries. Much was said about the working class leading role in society, but little was done to ensure that workers actually managed the enterprises. To a certain extent, this was facilitated by the permanent mobilization and propaganda activities carried out by the regime of the time, inspiring “socialist competition” and various kinds of “movement of shock workers and innovators”. People’s real, everyday enthusiasm, their readiness for another sacrifice in the name of a better future—all was closely intertwined with the formalism and demagoguery inherent in the communist system. The overwhelming majority of contemporary Ukrainian historians support the idea that by rebuilding the economy, people were reviving a normal life for themselves and their children, and the system attributed everything primarily to the “highest interests of the Bolshevik Revolution homeland.” The conditions in which people worked and lived were difficult, but people believed in a better life. This feeling was also strengthened by the fact that workers saw how, thanks to their valiant labor, the country was gradually overcoming enormous difficulties and solving the extremely complex tasks of the destroyed economy reviving. However, J. Stalin and his entourage, trying to strengthen the totalitarian regime, rejected the possibility of the country’s development in a democratic direction. So did the forces interested in preserving the command economy and vulgarized forms of ideology. At the same time, according to the researchers, it was also crucial that people had no experience of living in a society developing on the principles of democracy, which in itself hindered the understanding of the need for a radical renewal of the entire political system.

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<sup>44</sup> Smolii V. Donbas and Crimea in the economic, socio-political and ethno-cultural space of Ukraine: historical experience, modern challenges, prospects (Analytical report) / V. Smolii, S. Kulchytskyi, L. Yakubova. Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 2016. 589 p.

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