

# PROPAGANDA COMPONENT OF THE PROCESS OF SOVIETIZATION AND FORMS OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE WESTERN REGIONS OF UKRAINE IN 1944 - 1950

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The article deals with the peculiarities of the process of Sovietization of the western regions of Ukraine during the period of late Stalinism. Given the totalitarian nature of the Stalinist regime, it is emphasized that the informational space was one of the most important spheres of life, control over which by the ruling Communist Party was complete and inseparable. The scientific novelty is that

the author defines the organization and holding of meetings of various categories of the population as one of the active forms of Stalin's propaganda. They were an instrument of forcing the local population to trust the Soviet government, to legitimize it. It is noted that such events systematically repeated, gradually became part of Soviet everyday life. The task of Stalin's propaganda was to construct a new type of man - "homo Sovieticus", for whom communist ideology is not just a set of slogans, but an inner conviction.

**STARODUBETS, Galyna – SOKOLIUK, Serhii. Propagandistické komponenty procesu sovietyzácie a spôsoby ich realizácie v západných regiónoch Ukrajiny v rokoch 1944 – 1950. In *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 2022, roč. 26, č. 2, s. 408–421, ISSN 1338-7219, DOI: 10.17846/SHN.2022.26.2.408-421.** Text sa zaoberá osobitosťami procesu sovietyzácie západných oblastí Ukrajiny v období neskorého stalinizmu. Vzhľadom na totalitný charakter stalinského režimu bolo zrejmé, že oblasť informácií bola jednou z najdôležitejších sfér života. Kontrola vládnucej komunistickej strany bola dôsledná. Autorka približuje prípravu a organizovanie stretnutí rôznych kategórií obyvateľstva ako jednu z aktívnych foriem Stalinovej propagandy. Boli nástrojom, ako prinútiť miestne obyvateľstvo dôverovať sovietskej vláde a legitimizovať ju. Takéto udalosti sa systematicky opakovali a postupne sa stali súčasťou sovietskeho každodenného života. Úlohou stalinskej propagandy bolo skonštruovať nový typ človeka – „homo Sovieticus“, pre ktorého by komunistická ideológia nebula len súborom hesiel, ale vnútorným presvedčením.

**Kľúčové slová:** západné regióny Ukrajiny; sovietyzácia; propaganda; masmédiá; verejné podujatia;

**Keywords:** Western Regions of Ukraine; Sovietization; Propaganda; Mass Media; Public Events;

The process of incorporation of the western regions of Ukraine into the Soviet Union, which began on the eve of the German-Soviet war, was not completed before it. The development of a large-scale national liberation movement in this territory became a serious impediment to the implementation of Stalin's policy of Sovietization. In the first years after the liberation of the region from German invaders, the majority of the local population was extremely hostile to the measures of the Bolshevik government aimed at planting / restoring of party and state institutions here. The main subjects of the process of Sovietization during 1944 – 1945 were actually officials of different departments and representatives of so-called law enforcement agencies – police, prosecutors, courts, the KGB and the Soviet army. They were sent to work in the western regions according to order of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Bolsheviks of Ukraine (hereinafter – the Central Committee of the CP(b)U). The real "missionaries of the red power"<sup>1</sup> were the party-Soviet nomenclature, which bore the burden of responsibility for implementation of measures, which were to determine the integration of the region into the all-Union political system and a single national economic complex in these areas. The main tool for implementing this program was propaganda.

The problem we study is the subject of scientific discussions of modern historiography. In particular, the issue of Sovietization of Zakarpattya in 1944 – 1950 is considered in the monograph of the Ukrainian researcher V. Mishchanyn.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> STARODUBETS, Galyna. The missionaries of the Red power (Soviet Party Nomenclature of the Western Regions of Ukraine in 1944-the Beginning of 1946). Zhytomyr: Polissya, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> MISHCHANYN, Vasyl. Sovietization of Transcarpathia of 1944-1950 yy. Uzgorod, 2018.

Lviv researcher O. Stasiuk focuses on the propaganda activities of the Bolshevik government in the context of election campaigns.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the procedure of holding the elections to the Supreme Soviets of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR is considered by the author in framework of the peculiarities of the implementation of Soviet political institutions (in current case – the “Soviet electoral system”) in the political and symbolic space of Western Ukrainian society. The ideological and propaganda activities of the party bodies of the western regions of Ukraine in the first postwar decade are analyzed by R. Popp.<sup>4</sup> The researcher draws her attention to the forms and ways of involving the local intelligentsia in the processes of Sovietization. The specifics of the formation and activities of the party-Soviet nomenclature of the western Ukrainian region and its role in the process of formation / restoration of state institutions of power here are investigated by G. Starodubets.<sup>5</sup> The historiographical works of Ukrainian authors on this issue have a common feature. The process of Sovietization is interpreted by them mainly as a forceful planting of the unified Stalin’s model of economic, political, cultural and educational life without significant consideration of regional peculiarities.

The Polish researcher of the relations between the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe P. Bielicki holds a similar point of view on the essence of the policy of Sovietization. We distinguish four components of this process: *“the change of the political system, economic sphere, the need to adjust Kremlin’s satellite states to the USSR war machine and the persecution of the Church, which was often the last entity independent of the Communists.”*<sup>6</sup> Khachatur Stepanyan, an Armenian researcher of the history of the Transcaucasia in the 1920s – 1930s, interprets Sovietization as a procedure of *“power transfer from one political force to another.”*<sup>7</sup> We tend to assume that the process of including a certain territory in the orbit of the influence of Stalin’s regime (as in the case of countries of the so-called socialist camp), or its full incorporation into the administrative-territorial structure of the USSR should not be considered as a purely mechanical planting of main institutions of Bolshevik-Soviet power. We share the opinion of Felix Ackermann and Sören Urbansky, who *“understand Sovietization as a process that included key elements ranging from population changes, the imposition of institutions of a peculiarly Soviet type, and other physical and structural changes to more subtle features such as*

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<sup>3</sup> STASIUK, Oleksandra. The role of the Soviets in the Sovietization process of the Western regions of the Ukrainian SSR (1939 – 1941). In *Ukraine: Cultural Heritage, National Consciousness, Statehood* / Ed. Ihor Soliar; NAS of Ukraine, I. Krypiakievych Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Lviv, 2018, vol. 31, pp. 26-37.

<sup>4</sup> POPP, Ruslana. Ideological-propaganda policy of the soviet system in the western regions of Ukraine in 1944 – 1953 (according to the materials of Drohobych region). In *East European historical bulletin*, 2018, no. 8, pp. 143-152.

<sup>5</sup> STARODUBETS, The missionaries of the, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> BIELICKI, Paweł. The Iron Curtain as an Aspect of the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe in 1949–1953. In *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 2018, vol. 52, no. 1, pp.137-161.

<sup>7</sup> STEPANYAN, Khachatur. Sovietization of Armenia (An Attempt of Comparative Analysis). In *Soviet Statehood: History and Modernity*. Yerevan, 2018, pp. 48-59.

changes in the visual and linguistic surroundings.”<sup>8</sup> “The Soviet authorities represented the first state ruling this region and pursuing a violently transformative modernization mission that targeted the whole population.”<sup>9</sup> The global goal of the communist government was to reformat the social consciousness of the indigenous population, to form a new type of man, a conscious bearer of the ideas of the Bolshevik Party. Stalin’s propaganda served as an “instrument of re-education and part of the mission to plant a standard Soviet monoculture for the entire population in the territory of the Soviet Union.”<sup>10</sup> The purpose of our article is to characterize the forms and methods of Stalin’s propaganda used by the Bolshevik authorities in the process of Sovietization of the western regions of Ukraine. The subject of our research is the print media and the general meeting of various categories of the population. We set ourselves the task to show the manipulative technologies used by Soviet propagandists to achieve the main goal – the formation of a new type of man, the so-called “Homo Sovieticus”.

### Mass media as a tool of propaganda

One of the last works of Professor G. Pocheptsov, a well-known specialist in communication theory, has a rather symbolic title – “USSR: a country created by propaganda.” The author reasonably claims that “Soviet propaganda, as a religion in Muslim countries, was a necessary part of life, not a supplement to it.”<sup>11</sup> Media was one of the most important tools of Bolshevik propaganda. Therefore, immediately after the liberation of the western Ukrainian region from the German occupiers, “a mass of various publications collapsed on the locals. They were characterized by a clear party position, methods of journalists’ work veiled by democracy.”<sup>12</sup> The vast majority of them came from Moscow or Kyiv and was directed to Russian-speaking audience, formed by specialists sent here from the eastern regions of Ukraine or from other republics of the USSR. Since the propaganda stab was aimed mainly at local residents, the state leadership identified the creation of regional newspapers as one of the highest priorities of party leaders in the western regions of Ukraine.

The printed media was under the absolute control of the state, which monopolized all information flows and filled them with the content necessary to maintain its dominance. “For Soviet journals the Central Committee of the CP(b)U declared: “Every Soviet journal, whether it be scientific, literary, or any other, must be first of all a politically purposeful organ of the battle for a Communist society, for the development of

<sup>8</sup> URBANSKY, Sören – ACKERMANN, Felix. Einleitung – Introduction: Reframing Postwar Sovietization. Power, Conflict, and Accommodation. In *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 2016, vol. 64, no. 3, p. 357.

<sup>9</sup> TARIK Cyril Amar. Sovietization with a Woman’s Face: Gender and the Social Imaginary of Sovietness in Western Ukraine. In *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 2016, vol. 64, no. 3, p. 370.

<sup>10</sup> KHASYANOV, Oleg. Everyday life of the Soviet peasantry of the late Stalinist period. 1945 - 1953. M.:Liters. 2018. [Online]. Available on the internet: <https://www.litmir.me/br/?b=722326&p=1>

<sup>11</sup> POCHEPSOV, George. USSR: a country created by propaganda. Kharkov: Folio, 2019, p. 301.

<sup>12</sup> KRUPSKY, Ivan. Party leadership of the media as a kind of ideological censorship (on the example of Western Ukrainian lands in the postwar years). In *Totalitarianism as a system of destruction of national memory*. Lviv, 2020, p. 37.

*the wide masses of the Soviet people in the spirit of the ideology of Bolshevism.*"<sup>13</sup> The basic principles of building a network of printed publications here were determined by the central party and state authorities, and the results of their implementation in practice were periodically considered at special meetings of various levels. For example, in March 1945, participants of a meeting of editors of district and town newspapers in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR discussed the urgent problems faced by editors in establishing the work of local publishing houses — weak material resources, lack of paper, de facto lack of technical workers and journalists, etc. At the same time, at such meetings, journalists shared their experience in establishing the work of their publications, ways to attract freelance correspondents, mainly from the local population.

The vast majority of editors-in-chief of regional newspapers arrived at their workplaces immediately after the liberation of the western regions from the German occupiers from other regions of Ukraine and had a clear objective to promote the Sovietization of the region. Raised in an atmosphere of fear in the 1930s and in conditions of strict hierarchical subordination to the party authorities, they tried to shift responsibility for the content of newspapers to party functionaries. In the first months after liberation, it was common that *"the second secretary of the party's district committee was temporarily acting as editor."*<sup>14</sup> Each newspaper issue was agreed and approved by the district committee / town committee / regional committee of the party. The procedure generally had the following algorithm: the head of the propaganda sector of the district committee of the CP(B)U *"drew up an editorial plan and systematically gave practical advice after the publication of the newspaper, pointed out mistakes and what questions should be asked."*<sup>15</sup>

It is significant that neither the editors of the mass media nor the journalists in their mass questioned the correctness of the state policy regarding the actual deprivation of their right to freedom of expression, choice of topics for their articles, etc. Moreover, in public speeches at official meetings, they stressed the need for full control over newspaper publishing by the party's first secretaries of district / town committees. *"The newspaper is made by the district committee of the party, not by an independent institution"*, said one of the editors from the rostrum of the all-Ukrainian meeting. *"The first secretary must make the newspaper himself, along with the editor, and not listen to the editor from time to time."*<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that it was not about material and financial support of press publications, but about editorial policy. Such position of the leaders of Western Ukrainian newspapers is a vivid demonstration of the essence of Soviet journalism in Stalinist period, which became a sphere of service to the Bolshevik regime.

<sup>13</sup> SULLIVANT, Robert. *Soviets Politics and the Ukraine 1917-1957*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, p. 264.

<sup>14</sup> Central State Archives of Public Organizations of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as TsDAGO of Ukraine), fund 1 (the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine), distr. 70, file 359 (The transcript of an inter-regional meeting of editors of regional and city newspapers in the western regions of the Ukrainian SSR on elimination the remnants of German fascist agents — Ukrainian nationalists), p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 359, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 359, p. 41.

It should be emphasized that the regional press at the time, as a rule, did not have their "own face" and didn't differ from each other. They were united by a common theme of publications, each of which acted as an agitation and propaganda support for the activities of the party-Soviet government in the context of the Sovietization of the region. The most popular were materials which "reveal the essence of the Ukrainian-German nationalists, the worst enemies of the Ukrainian people"<sup>17</sup>; demonstrate the benefits of communist construction and communist education; show significant successes of the collective farm organization of work in the village, in comparison with individual farms (*"Peasantry in the past and the collective farm system"*; *"Collective farm system - the path to a prosperous and cultural life of the working peasantry"*<sup>18</sup>; show the essence of the Soviet democratic political system (*"Soviets - the political basis of the Soviet state"*, *"Soviet election law"*; *"What did the Soviet government give to the workers and peasants of the western regions"*<sup>19</sup>); *"Educate the masses in the spirit of devotion to our party"*.<sup>20</sup> Through methodical repetition and mass replication in the pages of printed publications of political ideologues and stamps such as: *"Ukrainian-German bourgeois nationalists"*, *"enemies of the people"*; *"banderivtsi"*; *"collective farm peasantry"*; Stalin's propagandists planted Bolshevik ideology in the region. In the public consciousness, it was realized not through the natural meaning of these definitions, but *"through the meanings, connotations, culturally fixed in stereotypes."*<sup>21</sup> Becoming ideological clichés, they gradually integrated from the official language environment into the public Soviet space, the formation of which *"was an integral part of the processes of Sovietization on the new Soviet periphery."*<sup>22</sup>

The headlines in local newspapers served as slogans that informed the reader about the great achievements of collective farmers in simplified form (*"Strengthen the struggle for performance of grain provision"*<sup>23</sup>; *"Public property - the basis of the collective farm system"*<sup>24</sup>; etc.), the historical role of J. Stalin and the Communist Party in building of socialism in the USSR (*"To leader and teacher Comrade Stalin J.V."*<sup>25</sup>; *"The victory of the bloc of communists and non-party - the victory of the Lenin-Stalin*

<sup>17</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 301 (The transcript of the Third Republican Meeting on Propaganda and Agitation at the Central Committee of the CP (b)U), p. 170.

<sup>18</sup> State archive of Ternopil region (hereinafter referred to as SATR), fund P-1 (Ternopil regional party committee), distr. 1, file 969 (References, information and testimony of the workers of the regional party of the department of the publishing house, the radio committee to the regional committee of the CP (b) U about the work of town and regional newspapers, radio committees, the press union. 1947), p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 427 (Reports, references, plans of work on the implementation by a group of consultants of CC CP(b)U decisions of of CC CP(b)U on measures to strengthen political and ideological work in the western regions and the Donbas), p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 359, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> BUTYRINA, M. Stereotypes of mass consciousness: features of formation and functioning in the media environment. Dnepropetrovsk: Slovo, 2009, p. 110.

<sup>22</sup> URBANSKY - ACKERMANN, Einleitung, pp. 353-362.

<sup>23</sup> New life. 10. 10. 1946. Strengthen the struggle for performance of grain provision.

<sup>24</sup> New life. 13. 04. 1947. Public property - the basis of the collective farm system.

<sup>25</sup> New life. 29. 08. 1946. To leader and teacher Comrade Stalin J.V.

party"<sup>26</sup>). In this way, the authorities labeled a virtual model of the desired reality, which did not coincide with reality at all, "formed memes that were to" float on the waves of our memory "on their own".<sup>27</sup> Such slogans gradually filled the visual space of everyday life of the Western Ukrainian population. They were written on posters, stands, which were placed on the facades of houses, special informational boards in the middle of large towns and district centers, in various propaganda points in villages, businesses, organizations and so on.

In the first years of the restoration of Soviet power, the editorial boards of local media actively implemented the practice of 1930s: involving representatives of the local population in writing reports on labor achievements or negative phenomena that took place in their labor groups. Such a form of "communication" with readers as "letters of workers" has become widespread. The text of such "posts" was usually overwhelmed with phrases-stamps from official party-Soviet documents, mixed with simple, naive and popular reflections on the "difficult laborer past in lordly Poland" and "the prosperous future of the collective farm." For example, a letter from a peasant, Serhiy Kukharyk, was published in one of the district newspapers in the Volyn region, who proudly states: "*Serhiy, did you have and could you have so much bread once in lordly Poland? No, I didn't. Neither my father nor my grandfather had that much bread. Wealthy and cultural life was brought to us, to working peasants, by the Stalin's collective farm system.*"<sup>28</sup>

Editors of some district newspapers of Volyn region had at their disposal "about 70-80 village correspondents. 1-2 people from each village wrote."<sup>29</sup> The subject of the articles was quite traditional and ideologically correct: about the positive consequences of the collective farm organization of work in the village, about the socialist competition of members of the local collective farm, about the establishment of Komsomol organization, about reconstruction of school premises, about unanimous support of party policy and judgment of the activities of "Ukrainian and German bourgeois nationalists" by the local population, etc. It varied depending on the political campaign which dominated during this period - whether the elections to the Verkhovna Rada (1946 - 1947), or establishing of the collective farm system (1947 - 1948), or the struggle against the Greek Catholic Church (1946 - 1947)). The theme of the struggle against the Ukrainian insurgent movement and the propaganda of the Soviet way of life under the leadership of J. Stalin and the Communist Party has traditionally been a constant. Using this method of attracting of village correspondents, the party propagandists aimed at: demonstrating the democratic nature of Soviet power; showing that the problems of ordinary peasants are close and clear to the Bolshevik Party and that it is ready to solve them together with the people; to expand the circle of consumers of the newspaper and, consequently - potential objects of propaganda influence.

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<sup>26</sup> New life. 13. 02. 1947. The victory of the bloc of communists and non-party - the victory of the Lenin-Stalin party.

<sup>27</sup> POCHOPTSOV, USSR: a country, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Soviet Volyn. 16.09. 1950. Kuharyk S. I am confident in the tomorrow.

<sup>29</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 359, p. 42.

Local party-Soviet or economic activists “*chairmen of village councils and members of land commissions*”<sup>30</sup>, the so-called leaders of agriculture often were the authors of propaganda articles. Thus, in 1947 several articles appeared on the pages of Ternopil newspaper “*Vilne Zhyttia*”. The authors were the participants of “*republic meeting of the leaders of agriculture: a peasant from the Velykoborkivskyi district Olga Tverdokhlib, a peasant from the Pochaiv district Maria Pavlyshyna*. In their articles, they spoke about their own impressions of the success of collective farmers in the eastern regions of Ukraine and called on the peasants of Ternopil region to quickly break with the small single-owner farm and join the collective farms.”<sup>31</sup>

In this case, it is worth focusing not only on the subject of these inherently propagandistic materials, but also on the way they are presented. The agitators for the “*bright Soviet future*” were not foreign nomenclature workers, but a “*little man*” from among the local population. Such activists were used by the authorities as a kind of advertisement for the image of the “*Soviet man*”. However, we do not tend to consider them exclusively as objects of Stalin’s propaganda and repeaters of its main slogans. The task of the authorities was them to become not just the bearers of Bolshevik ideology, but, as the famous American researcher Jochen Hellbeck states, “*an active beginning, the beginning ideologically active*.”<sup>32</sup> Some of these people quite consciously and meaningfully perceived the communist ideology, choosing their way out of the state of cognitive dissonance caused by the absolute mismatch of reality with the world promoted by the new authorities. In this way occurred “*the transformation of oneself and social space, the rationalization of impenetrable political programs and thus they became an ideological force that acted on an equal footing with the leaders of the party and the state*.”<sup>33</sup> Exactly such people were demanding participants in the process of Sovietization, who acted as its active transforming force and at the same time formed their own ideological consciousness.

In the period we are referring to, the newspaper was not just a tool of propaganda. It was interpreted as one of the symbols of the new government, encroachment on which could be severely punished. Thus, one of the editors of the district newspaper of Ternopil region in 1945 was outraged by the fact that “*in one of the private shops he found 40 copies of the newly printed newspaper in which the seller wrapped the meat*.” He told the prosecutor about it. But the prosecutor stated; “*You shouldn’t make a fuss about it*.” However, the editor had a different opinion, believing that “*it is necessary to pay attention to such facts, special attention*.”<sup>34</sup> The local party leadership took various measures to distribute both regional and central newspapers among the population of the western region of Ukraine. Thus, in Ternopil in the premises of various institutions and enterprises and on the streets of the city were installed special “*newspaper windows*. Party organizations as-

<sup>30</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 359, p. 42.

<sup>31</sup> SATR, fund P-1, distr.1, file 969, p. 71.

<sup>32</sup> HELLBECK, Jochen. Everyday ideology: life under Stalinism. In *Inviolable stock*, 2010, 4. [Online]. Available on the internet: <https://magazines.gorky.media/nz/2010/4/povsednevnyaya-ideologiya-zhizn-pri-stalinizme.html>

<sup>33</sup> HELLBECK, Everyday ideology.

<sup>34</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 359, p. 48.



*signed responsible persons from among communists, Komsomol members, and non-party activists for each of them.*"<sup>35</sup> Reports of editors of district and regional newspapers on this issue were regularly presented at meetings of the relevant committees of the CP(B)U.

Thus, the communist press bodies performed the functions as a collective propagandist and served as an important tool in the policy of planting of the Soviet power in the western regions of Ukraine.

### **"Meetings of Workers" in the practice of political propaganda activities of the committees of the Bolshevik Party**

During the postwar period, the practice of holding various meetings of workers in terms of the realization of propaganda campaigns of Stalin regime became widely used in the western Ukrainian regions. Among the most significant were campaigns to organize the collection of state loans, arranging the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in 1946 and the Ukrainian SSR in 1947, the organization of collective farms in 1947 – 1949, permanent campaigns to discredit the Ukrainian insurgent movement and so on. Party-Soviet officials actively used this traditional Bolshevik form of agitation and propaganda work to socially mobilize and establish communication relationship with the local population. On the other hand, it was a way of specific subjectivizing of political discourse by including a *"little man ready to sacrifice personal attachments for the sake of the highest justice"* <sup>36</sup> in it.

In practice, this took the form of "spontaneous" speeches by peasants / workers, who immediately after listening to the lecture expressed their active civic position of support of certain party initiatives. Usually, preliminary work of local activists / officials took place before such actions. In particular, to prepare the team for a "politically correct" response to the speeches of agitators and propagandists. In the official party reports of that time, we often find quotes from the speeches of ordinary citizens at meetings. Thus, the campaign to raise funds for a state loan in 1946 was accompanied by regular lectures by agitators from the party. At one of the meetings in the village Gorodok in Zalizhchyky district, Ternopil region, a poor peasant Ivan Oliynyk said: *"The German fascists, who treacherously attacked our country, caused a lot of damage. Destroyed towns and villages, factories and mills. Everything needs to be rebuilt and we need to exceed the pre-war level in five years. I sign up and pay 400 rubles in cash. I encourage everyone to take part in this important political campaign."* In another village of the same district, similar thoughts were expressed by a war invalid Didur P.M.: *"I am a war invalid. I defended my homeland together with all the peoples of the USSR. Our Red Army defeated German fascism. This*

<sup>35</sup> SATR, fund P-1, distr.1, file 1247 (Information of district committees, town party committees to the regional committee of the CP (b) U about arrangement agitation and propaganda, mass political, cultural educational work, further collectivization of rural economy. 1948, p. 43.

<sup>36</sup> KHASYANOV, Oleg. *Everyday life of the Soviet peasantry of the late Stalinist period. 1945 - 1953.* M.:Liters. 2018. [Online]. Available on the internet: <https://www.litmir.me/br/?b=722326&p=1>

*victory must be fixed. The people now face the task of rebuilding the national economy in five years. We must help the state with our loan.*"<sup>37</sup>

A quick analysis of the stylistics of the statements of "ordinary citizens" gives reason to doubt their authorship. The speeches of illiterate apolitical poor peasants are full of Bolshevik propaganda stamps, pathetic statements of support for the policy of the party and Stalin. The same evident stage theatricality of such events was manifested during the meetings in the working groups. The entry of the USSR in the Cold War required extensive agitation and propaganda work, which party officials carried out with special care in the western regions of Ukraine, affected by the "bacillus" of national liberation ideas. In the second half of May 1948, a large-scale action was held to explain the official message "Towards Soviet-American Relations" published in the main party newspaper of the CPSU, "Pravda". An obligatory part of the meeting of the groups was the speeches of the workers, in which they expressed "ardent support for the correct policy of our government, the wise Stalin's foreign policy of the Soviet government" and "condemned the American and British reactionaries."<sup>38</sup>

In order to give the stencil official meeting the appearance of genuine interest of listeners in their topics, it was practiced to include elements of dialogue in their monologue program. As a rule, the participants of the meetings asked the lecturer "convenient" questions, thus providing him with some support, creating the necessary moral and psychological background. For example, in 1946 at a meeting in the village. Draganivka (Ternopil region) peasant Maletskyi Ivan was interested, "why is it necessary to move to a socialist system when the age was capitalist? Communists are fighting for a better life. Why do we have to work hard under socialism as well?" Vasyl Kvas, a peasant from village Zaboiky, asked the speaker: "What forces do the banderivtsi rely on and what feeds them?"<sup>39</sup> The answers for such questions were a continuation of the agitation report with an emphasis on issues of particular importance for the region – the struggle against the Ukrainian national liberation movement, the creation of collective farms, the involvement of local people in party ranks and more.

As a rule, the lecture work of party agitators and propagandists was evaluated by two indicators – the number of lectures held and their quality. The criterion of the latter was "perspicuity and effectiveness"<sup>40</sup>, so the implementation the slogans proclaimed by the speakers in practice. Such as: joining the ranks of the collective farm peasantry; exit from the ranks of the UPA with guilt; taking socialist com-

<sup>37</sup> SATR, fund P-1, distr.1, file 673 (Information of the districts party committees for the regional committee of the CP(b)U about arrangement of agitation and propaganda, mass political, cultural educational work among the population of the regions, the training of ideological personnel), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> SATR, fund P-1, distr.1, file 1258 (References, information of the regional committee workers about the work of the network of party education, the state of mass political and cultural educational work among the population, holding meetings), p. 58.

<sup>39</sup> SATR, fund P-1, distr. 1, file 673, p. 134.

<sup>40</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 1026 (Reports on the work of propaganda and agitation departments of Rivne, Stalin, Stanislav, Sumy and Ternopil regional committees of the CP(b)U), p. 133.

mitments to carry out the plan overtime, and so on. For example, *“in the spring of 1947 in the village Krasnostavtsi of Sniatyn district, Stanislav region after a lecture by the secretary of the district committee of the AUCP(b) on the importance of the collective farm system, a crumpled letter indicating the whereabouts of the “bandits” was found.”*

<sup>41</sup> In June 1947 the lectures with a topic *“Stalin the inspirer and organizer of the collective farm system”* were presented to all villages of the same district. During the reading of the reports, 103 applications of peasants for joining the collective farms were submitted additionally.<sup>42</sup> *“In the village Zymno of Volodymyr-Volynskyi district in Volyn region during October and November 1946 more than 350 interviews were held involving 3540 people. The peasants of Zymno fulfilled all their obligations to supply the state ahead of schedule: bread, milk, hay, meat, potatoes and cash taxes.”*<sup>43</sup>

The party leadership required its lecturers to include participants of the meetings in the process of discussing important issues. Such tactics, which were used in propaganda practice, were additional tools for establishing a political regime, which historian A. Tikhomirov calls *“a regime of coercive trust”* and were intended to legitimize Soviet power in the western Ukrainian region. After all, *“formally, the Soviet government endowed the individual with rights and responsibilities, expected him to be involved in political transformations, and promised to reciprocate in exchange for the acceptance and support of the regime.”*<sup>44</sup> The public expression of one's civic position partly served as a kind of payment for the *“indulgence”* that the government offered to loyal citizens in the form of small benefits (for example, bonuses, awards, food rations, etc.) and leadership positions. On the other hand, the demonstration of social activity by a person was interpreted by party-Soviet officials as a reflection of the process of forming of politically conscious citizens.

Anyone's attempt to *“hide”* in their own individual space, to take a passive position of the observer was interpreted as a manifestation of hostility, bourgeois remnants, which must be eradicated. Previous experience of building a Stalin-style state has shown that in the new Soviet culture, as well *“there were no gray areas in a typical Russian's outlook; for or against, yes or no, good or bad. Tolerance for anything other than a rigid stance on all matters was simply unacceptable.”*<sup>45</sup> Any manifestation of the slightest dissent was not only unwelcome, but could be severely punished. Regular meetings of workers at all levels have gradually become a kind of tradition with a set of appropriate rituals, which were perceived by both parties as nothing more than a formality. *“With the help of clearly defined attitudes and stereotypes, endless repetitions, party propaganda tried to create a standard-communist*

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<sup>41</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 1026, p. 133.

<sup>42</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 1026, p. 159.

<sup>43</sup> TsDAGO of Ukraine, fund 1, distr. 70, file 1013 (Reports of the Vinnitsa, Volyn and Voroshylovgrad Regionals Committees of the CP(b)U on the work of the propaganda and agitation department for 1947), p. 42.

<sup>44</sup> TIKHOMIROV, Aleksey. *“Regime of forced trust” in Soviet Russia, 1917-1941*. In *Inviolable stock*, 2013, 6. [Online]. Available on the internet: <https://magazines.gorky.media/nz/2013/6/rezhim-prinuditelnogo-doveriya-v-sovetskoj-rossii-1917-1941-gody.html>.

<sup>45</sup> BOYLSTON, Scott. *Case study one visual propaganda in Soviet Russia*. [Online]. Available on the internet: [https://www.academia.edu/6387163/A\\_Study\\_of\\_Soviet\\_Propaganda](https://www.academia.edu/6387163/A_Study_of_Soviet_Propaganda).

*vision not only of political phenomena, but also of all life.*"<sup>46</sup> The procedure of public discussion of the decisions of party congresses, plenums, and meetings became an element of the Soviet everyday life of the Western Ukrainian population, an indirect instrument of forcing trust to the Soviet government. On the other hand, in this way the Bolshevik government formed a category of public activists for whom communist ideology became an inner conviction.

Thus, in the process of Sovietization of the western regions of Ukraine in 1944 – 1950, the Bolshevik government, actively used various forms of propaganda in parallel with the forcible planting of major state institutions. Given the totalitarian nature of the Stalin regime, the information space was one of the most important spheres of life, control over which by the ruling Communist Party was complete and inseparable. Therefore, organization of the work of the editorial offices of local regional and district newspapers was one of the first measures of the regional authorities. Party control covered all aspects of the media. The topics of newspaper publications popularized the measures of the Soviet government, which were carried out within the framework of political and propaganda campaigns (struggle against the Ukrainian national liberation movement, elections to Verkhovna Rada, collectivization, struggle against class enemies, etc.). The task of journalists was not to inform readers about events or their analysis, but to propagate the reality constructed by Stalin's propaganda.

One of the active forms of Stalin's propaganda of this period was the organization and holding of meetings of various categories of the population. Systematically repeating, such events gradually became part of Soviet everyday life. They were an instrument of forcing the local population to trust the Soviet government, its legitimization. Stalin's propagandists in every way encouraged / forced the local population to publicly express their opinion in the pages of press publications or in the process of holding meetings of labor groups. The demonstration of an active civil position by a person was considered by the authorities as proof of his/her recognition of the correctness of state policy. The task of Stalin's propaganda was to construct a new type of man – "homo Sovieticus", for whom communist ideology is not just a set of slogans, but an inner conviction.

In our research, we considered only two components of communist propaganda during the period of Sovietization of the western regions of Ukraine. The problem of studying the propaganda component of the content and forms of political training of party and civil officials in the outlined region during the period of late Stalinism seems promising for scientific research.

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