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Podilia Village in 1944: Social and Economic Situation

Abstract. *The aim of the article is to analyze and characterize the social and economic processes in Vinnytsia region agriculture, which accompanied the Soviet regime restoration after the region was liberated from the German-Romanian occupation in 1944. The research methodology is based on a combination of general scientific principles of analysis, synthesis, generalization and special-historical principles of historical-criticism, historical-systematic and specific-problematic research, quantitative methods with the principles of historicism, systematics, and scientific verification. The scientific novelty of the work lies primarily in the fact that the author researched and analyzed new sources, critically examined Soviet party documents of the stated time and revealed the characteristics of the social and economic situation in the Podilia village after the restoration of Stalin's regime and collective farming. Conclusions.* *The restoration of the colonial communist Soviet regime in the Vinnytsia region did not improve the social and economic situation for the collective farm peasantry. On top of the material and human losses inflicted by the German-Romanian occupation and military operations of the warring parties, there was added a strict exploitative policy of state procurement, and forced relocation of the population to Crimea and Donbass, which further weakened Podilia village. Some aspects of the problem need further study and research of archival documents of the time.*

Key words: *Soviet regime, collective farm peasantry, procurement, mobilization, labor force, relocation, personnel, moods.*

The problem statement. The publications devoted to Vinnytsia region agriculture in 1944 reveal mostly the material and human losses of the rural population in the Vinnytsia region caused by the Second World War. Much less attention is paid to the social and economic processes that accompanied the restoration of communist Soviet rule in the Vinnytsia region, and the conditions in which this took place.

Analysis of sources and recent publications. The state of agriculture in the Vinnytsia region in 1944 has not been the subject of a comprehensive study yet, although some issues have been partially discussed in the scientific literature. Thus, the peculiarities of postwar Ukraine development are analyzed in the works of M. Koval [Koval, 1990], O. Bazhan [Bazhan, 2005], V. Baran and V. Danylenko [Baran & Danilenko, 1999]. The researchers V. Kononenko [Kononenko, 2005a] and O. Koliastruk [Koliastruk, 2012] partly characterized everyday life of Ukrainian peasants in the postwar period. Some aspects of tax policy for the collective farm peasantry is considered in the article by B. Romaniuk [Romaniuk, 2016]. O. Melnychuk and T. Melnychuk offered a thorough study of Podilia peasantry's everyday life in the period of late Stalinism on the material of a separate village [Melnychuk, O. & Melnychuk, T., 2020]. This paper uses the data obtained in the Vinnytsia region State Archives as the base source for research.

The purpose of the article is to analyze new archival sources to examine social and economic conditions of the Podilia collective farm village in 1944.

The results of the research. The Ukrainian National Liberation Revolution of 1917–1921, the New Economic Policy and repressions against nationally conscious Ukrainians in the 1920s, collectivization, the Holodomor-Genocide, political repressions against the Ukrainian peasantry, World War II – all these events took place in a very short period in history, within the lifespan of one generation – from 1929 to 1945. It is in this context, in our opinion, that the situation in the Ukrainian / Podilia village in the early postwar years should be considered: these years saw the resumption of the colonial policy towards Ukraine, introduced after the liquidation of the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic and the occupation of this territory by the Red Army in 1920–1921. In 1941–1944, the Soviet occupation regime was substituted by the German-Romanian, that had actually the same goal as the previous one: to pump out as many resources as possible. However, the Ukrainian peasants felt that it was easier to survive “under the Germans and the Romanians” than “under Stalin.” The main reason for this was clear: private property. Though very limited, private property in 1941–1944 still gave more chances for peasants to survive by working much of their time for themselves, which was considered a crime and was punishable under the Stalin regime.

With the liberation of the Vinnytsia region from the German-Romanian occupiers, the situation of the peasantry didn't change much. The village, which even before the German-Soviet war in 1941 was in

a state of poverty in all respects, had to return to the old Stalinist collective farm rules that became even harsher due to the ongoing war which still required enormous resources.

The situation in the Vinnytsia region villages after the return of the Soviet regime is to some extent reflected in the "Concise economic reference of the Vinnytsia region", which contains general figures at the time of liberation and compares them with the pre-war years. Thus, the rural population of the region decreased by 478,483 thousand people compared to 1939. The number of state farms, in comparison with January 1, 1941, increased by 1 – from 43 to 44, and the number of collective farms decreased by 20 – from 1959 to 1939. The number of machine and tractor stations remained unchanged – 84. The number of collective farm households in the region increased slightly during the years of the German-Romanian occupation – from 463,766 to 490,629 [SAV&R, F. P-136. Op. 21. Ref. 76. Arc. 1].

Sowing areas were significantly reduced. If the 1940 harvest was grown on 1,816,887 hectares, in 1944 the figure was 1,397,147 hectares [SAV&R. F. P-136. Op. 21. Ref. 76. Arc. 1]. This created extraordinary conditions in the Vinnytsia region, which threatened it with a humanitarian catastrophe, especially in the conditions of the war.

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Conclusions. The consequences of German-Soviet war and German-Romanian occupation significantly worsened the social and economic situation in the Vinnytsia district. Significant human casualties and decrease in the population of the region, destruction of the already weak material and technical base of collective farms were the consequences of the management of the new occupants. 1944 was characterized by a significant reduction in livestock, especially cows and horses, which could to some extent replace the technique. The personnel support of collective farms was unsatisfactory. . . .

Acknowledgments. Sincere gratitude to the staff of State Archives of Vinnytsia and the region for help with the research materials, and to members of the editorial board of the journal – for constructive advice during the preparation of the article for publication.

Financing. The author did not receive financial support for the research and publication of this paper.

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Подільське село у 1944 р.: соціально-економічне становище

Анотація. Метою статті є аналіз і характеристика соціально-економічних процесів у сільському господарстві Вінниччини, що супроводжували відновлення советського режиму після звільнення області у 1944 р. від німецько-румунських окупантів. **Методологія дослідження** ґрунтується на поєднанні загальнонаукових принципів аналізу, синтезу, узагальнення та спеціально-історичних – історико-критичного, історико-системного, конкретно-проблемного, кількісного з принципами історизму, системності, науковості та верифікації. **Наукова новизна** роботи полягає передусім у тому, що автор на основі дослідження та аналізу нових джерел, критичного осмислення партійно-советських документів тієї доби розкрив характерні риси соціально-економічної ситуації, що склалась у подільському селі з відновленням сталінського режиму та колективного господарювання. **Висновки.** Відновлення колоніального комуністичного советського режиму на Вінниччині не змінило на краще соціально-економічну ситуацію для колгоспного селянства. До матеріальних та людських втрат, нанесених німецько-румунськими окупантами, військовими операціями ворогуючих сторін, додалась жорстка визискувальна політика державних заготівель, примусових переселень населення до Криму та на Донбас, яка ще більше знесилила подільське село. Окремі аспекти проблеми потребують подальшого вивчення шляхом досліджень архівних документів того часу.

Ключові слова: советський режим, колгоспне селянство, заготівлі, мобілізація, робоча сила, переселення, кадри, настрої.